UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

WHOLE LANGUAGE IN A SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: AN INVESTIGATION INTO A NEWLY IMMIGRATED CHINESE TEACHER'S SECOND LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY

BY

VICTOR YONGCHUN WANG

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **Whole language in a second language classroom: An investigation into a newly immigrated Chinese teacher's second language pedagogy** submitted by **Victor Yongchun Wang** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated, with love and respect, to Chuck and Linnie Chamberlin. Without their love, support and encouragement, my academic achievements in Canada would not have been possible. Their friendship enriched me. From them, I learned how to live a more meaningful life. I have been able to soar higher than an eagle because Chuck and Linnie were the wind beneath my wings.

ABSTRACT

The focus of the research was to investigate the teaching of Mandarin as a second language in a bilingual setting with a teacher recently immigrated from China who used whole language principles normally reserved for teaching language arts in a regular English language (L1) environment. The primary contribution of this study is to increase our understanding of the second language (L2) classroom.

This study mainly focused on the participating teacher's use of whole language principles in the classroom and his philosophy supporting his pedagogical practice. A review of the limited related literature indicated that the use of whole language principles in second language classrooms enhances second language development in the learners. This study aimed to recapitulate the whole language principles in action in the second language classroom in order to increase our knowledge of how they could be used in second language classrooms. The findings of this study are intended to enrich the literature concerning the use of whole language philosophy in the educational context.

In this study, a case study utilizing a qualitative research approach in orientation and methodology, includes interviews and observations as major methods of obtaining data, was structured as research methodology.

Three research questions were employed to guide the study. They were: 1. What principles of whole language are used by the teacher? 2. How does the Chinese teacher use whole language principles in the course of helping children learn Mandarin? 3. What are the reasons for using whole language principles instead of traditional approaches which the teacher was accustomed to using in China?

The researcher observed in the participant's classroom for a period of over two months. The lengthy period of observation enabled him to provide a thick description of the Chinese teacher's second language classroom. The participant and his students were interviewed to gain an understanding of their previous experience, the school, the participant's teaching, and his pedagogical philosophy. The interviews were all conducted within the framework of the research questions.

The conclusion of the research was the result of collaborative construction and interaction between the research participant and the researcher. Implications for second language teaching, second language teacher education, and second language research were drawn to conclude this research report.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Thousands of Conversations

Thousands of conversations
Surround every young child,
Each reconstructing the language
Each young child has compiled.

Constantly expanding
In a rich contextual grain,
Reorganizing the complexity
Within the developing brain.

The conversations of the home
As meaningful social tools,
Expectations of a community and a culture
Which young children bring to school,

The social functions of language,
The maturing natural give and take,
A system that fuels its own learning
In the connections that young children make,

Which as teachers,
We must never fail to support,
Extending natural conversations
Of extraordinary import.

For it is neither the fancy materials
Nor the stacks of textbooks that we use,
Rather it is the opportunities for invention
And active construction that we choose.

It is real people with interesting conversations,
Personal connections all the while,
It is the way that the whole society
Relates to this developing child.
(Boloz, 1993, p. 6)

1.1. Encountering the problems

As a second language teacher myself, I have long been enamored with the studies and research on how to teach in a second language learning classroom. After taking some courses in the Department of Elementary Education about language learning and teaching theories, I now have a better understanding of the whole language philosophy. Boloz's poem, *Thousands of Conversations* (1993) which I quoted above, has intrigued me and I perceive this poem has captured the pith of whole language teaching philosophy. My experience in teaching a second language together with my study of language acquisition has caused me to reflect on and contemplate how to implement whole language principles in second language (L2) learning classrooms.

It was this fascination which led me to search the literature on how teachers with the whole language philosophy teach language to young children. Through my exhaustive library research, I found several educators (Harste and Burke, 1977; Ken and Yetta Goodman, 1981; and Watson, 1989) had written extensively on the topic of applying whole language to teach young children in elementary schools. To my dismay, very little writing and research was available on this topic in the field of second language education. Hence, I thought it would be very interesting and worthwhile for me to go to a second language classroom and observe how a second language teacher with a whole language philosophy teaches the target language to his or her students.

Coincidentally, in the summer of 1994, my friend Daquan Gao, who was then a full-time teacher in an English and Chinese bilingual school in Edmonton teaching Mandarin to young Canadian children, phoned and asked me to tutor one of his students during the summer holiday period. I gladly accepted that responsibility. I met the young boy several days later and started working with him on his Mandarin. I found the young boy to be very hard working and also found that he could speak Mandarin very fluently. During a coffee break, I asked him how my friend Daquan Gao taught Mandarin in the bilingual school. The following is what he told me.

> ... Our Chinese language teacher used many different ways to teach in our Mandarin class. In the morning, he asks some of us to tell news stories. He also tells a lots of stories, read novels and Chinese poems in the class. He asks us to write our own stories and plays. In fact, his Mandarin class is somewhat like the English language arts. We are all interested in the Mandarin learning, in fact, we all enjoy to be in his class. (Larry, 06/23/94)

I was very excited about what I heard. When the new school term commenced, I immediately went to the bilingual school and observed Daquan Gao's class and conversed with him about his language teaching pedagogy, teaching experience, and his philosophy of education. I found that Daquan Gao has changed a lot since he left China. His ideas were so new and stimulating and his teaching practice was so different from what I had remembered from China. I asked many questions and Daquan Gao always answered them with great patience. There were so many things that I wanted to know about his teaching practice and his underlying philosophies. One thing that impressed me most was his use of whole language teaching activities and principles in the Mandarin as a second language classroom. I found that it was very interesting to use whole language in the second language class to support young children to learn their target languages. I believed it to be favorable and natural for teachers to use whole language in the first language (L1)

classroom. How can teachers utilize whole language principles to teach students a second language? I really wished to know the wondrous artifice that Daquan Gao employed in the class to help the young second language learners to learn the target language and why he began to teach this way.

Through our conversations, I found Daquan Gao was more than willing to talk about his frustrations and future aspirations. Being a new immigrant in an entirely new school system in Canada, teaching and socializing for Daquan Gao was not effortless. It has been three years now since he became a member of the bilingual school. He humorously called the first two years in school a survival period. He told me that he had to socialize with the school staff, get to know the Canadian students, meet all the school requirements and deadlines, and get to know other routines which he had never experienced in China. Now, he has become quite familiar with the system, and quite proficient in his daily language teaching in school. Daquan Gao told me that he constantly reflects on his pedagogical practice and tries to integrate whole language with the educational ideals that he has developed from his experiences while living and teaching in China, while studying in a Canadian university, and while teaching in this bilingual school in Canada. He believed there were many places in this bilingual school and the educational system that could be, and should be, changed and improved. One example he gave me was the fact that in Edmonton all the Chinese-English bilingual schools are having their teachers teach young children to learn the archaic and complex Chinese characters. The use of the complex Chinese characters has been banned in mainland China since the 1950s due to the fact that they are hard to remember and difficult to write. In order to replace the complex characters, the Chinese government adopted a new and simplified character system. He believed that the local school system in Edmonton should adopt the new Chinese character system because more and more people in today's world who speak Chinese would use the simplified characters rather than the complex ones.

1.2. Purpose of the study

The focus of the research was to investigate the teaching of Mandarin as a second language in a bilingual setting with a teacher recently immigrated from China who used whole language principles normally reserved for teaching language arts in a regular English language (L1) environment.

Four questions guided the study. They were:

1. What principles of whole language are used by the teacher? This involved observations in the classroom and discussions with the teacher as well as a review of the literature pertaining to whole language instruction for comparison purposes.

2. How does the Chinese teacher use whole language principles in the course of helping children learn Mandarin?

3. What are the reasons for using whole language principles instead of traditional approaches which the teacher was accustomed to using in China? This, of necessity, involved investigating the teacher's current philosophy of second language instruction and how it differs from his philosophy as he learned English as a second language in China and how he taught English to Chinese students.

4. What implications might be drawn from this research for second language education?

1.3. The significance of the study

The primary contribution of this study is to increase our understanding of the second language classroom. This study mainly focused on the participating teacher's use

of whole language principles in the classroom and his philosophy supporting his pedagogical practice. A review of the limited related literature indicated that the use of whole language principles in second language classrooms enhances second language development in the learners. This study aimed to recapitulate the whole language principles in action in the second language classroom in order to increase our knowledge of how they could be used in second language classrooms. The findings of this study are intended to enrich the literature concerning the use of whole language philosophy in the educational context.

For a long time, classroom teachers were regarded solely as passive subjects in pedagogical research. They were being observed and analyzed. The body of knowledge in instructional research focused on mainly how and what the teachers should do in the classrooms. The complex and changing nature of the craft of teaching has been largely ignored (Clandinin and Connelly, 1991). The proposed research was aimed at exploring not only the observable aspects of teaching, such as instructional strategies, but also the unobservable side of the craft -- the practicing teacher's philosophy.

1.4. Ethical considerations and the use of English language as the vehicle to report this research

The key participant of the research, the second language teacher, as well as other participants, the participant's colleagues, and all his students were assured confidentiality and anonymity. The names used in this dissertation are all fictitious. The students' handwritten Chinese character writing was not presented in the final research report, but was translated and presented in English language during data analysis. The key participant's speech, as well as that of the other participants, was also translated into English language for research analysis. The purpose of writing this dissertation in such a

manner is, first of all, to make sure that the participants' identities could not be revealed so as to achieve complete confidentiality, and secondly to make the content of this dissertation accessible to the broad English speaking academic world in North America.

1.5. Abbreviations

In this dissertation, the following abbreviations have been used:

ALM:	Audiolingual method
BC:	British Columbia
CLT:	Communicative language teaching
DM:	Direct method
ECBEA:	The Edmonton Chinese Bilingual Education Association
EFL:	English as a foreign language
ESL:	English as a second language
GTM:	Grammar translation method
L1:	First language
L2:	Second language
LAD:	Language acquisition device
LA:	Language arts
LDP:	Linguistic data pool
LRT:	Light railway transit
MT:	Mother tongue
NDP:	New democratic party
TESL:	Teaching English as a second language
ZPD:	Zone of proximal development

1.6. Organization of the dissertation

This dissertation consists of eight chapters. **CHAPTER TWO** presents a review on second language methodologies, principles in whole language, and relevant literature

as background to this study. **CHAPTER THREE** describes the design of the research. It includes a description of the methodological procedures used for collecting data and analyzing it. **CHAPTER FOUR** provides information about the research participant Gao Daquan's life experience and some information on the English language learning environment in China. **CHAPTER FIVE** presents my narrative stories and my perceptions on learning. **CHAPTER SIX** describes the context of the study. **CHAPTER SEVEN** presents the data and a discussion of the data and the literature relevant to the major themes. **CHAPTER EIGHT** presents a brief review of the research and its conclusions. Implications for second language education are drawn and recommendations for further research are made.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

> Whether stated or not, all research is guided by some theoretical orientations. (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992, p. 33)

2.1. Introduction

As this study dealt with second language learning and teaching, the whole language philosophy and its uses in educational settings, I will briefly summarize second language teaching methodologies, whole language principles, and their uses in the first language (L1) and second language (L2) classrooms.

2.2. Second language teaching methodologies

Simon Fraser University professor Hector Hammerly (1982) had a very extensive review of second language teaching methodologies in his book entitled *Synthesis in Second Language Teaching: An Introduction to Languistics*. After reading this book, I felt my knowledge on the history of second language education had increased and I became aware of the gradual development of today's second language teaching methodology. In the following section, I will summarize the prevalent second and foreign language teaching approaches as identified by Professor Hammerly to provide a general

overview of the methodologies in the field of second language education and set up a theoretical context for the discussion and analysis of the research data.

2.2.1. Grammar translation method (GTM)

Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is the most traditional method for second language teaching and has a very long history. According to Richards and Rodgers (1986), it is an offspring of German scholarship. It was first known in North America as the Prussian Method (Kelly, 1969). Even today, this approach is still widely used in many educational systems in some parts of the world.

GTM has its roots in the manner in which Latin and Greek have been taught for centuries. The aim of GTM on learning a second language is to aid the learner to read literature in the target language or to assist the learner to attain cognitive enrichment that comes along with learning a second language. The chief characteristics of GTM are (Kelly, 1969; Hawatt, 1984; and Richards and Rodgers, 1986): 1) It is a method of studying a second or foreign language that approaches the target language first through point by point analysis of its grammatical rules and regulations, followed by consolidation translation exercises such as exercises of translating sentences and texts into and out of the target language. Through translation exercises and drills, students are expected to become capable readers and writers of the target language. 2) It gives an emphasis on reading, writing, translation, and the conscious learning of grammatical rules, but pays little attention to develop speaking and listening abilities in students. Little attempt is made to support students to communicate orally in the target language. 3) Memorization is the cardinal learning tactic. Learners spend most of their class time talking about the language, memorizing the grammatical rules and internalizing the new lexical items. 4) The learners' native language is the language of instruction in the class. It is used to

explain new lexical and grammatical items and to make comparisons between the target language and the students' native language. 5) Vocabulary items are picked only on the basis of texts utilized. New words are taught through studies of their lexical roots, linguistic transformations, and rote learning. In a GTM oriented second or foreign language textbook, the grammatical rules and regulations are supplied and depicted, a section of new vocabulary items is presented through bilingual word lists, and a set of specially designed translation drills is offered at the end of each section. 6) Grammatical rules are taught in an organized and systematic way. 7) Accuracy in grammatical and lexical uses is accentuated. Students are expected to learn target language grammatical rules and are able to translate into and out of the target language.

Critics of GMT suggest the following limitations (Kelly, 1969; Hawatt, 1984; and Richards and Rodgers, 1986): 1) The target language is taught through the learners' native language with great emphasis placed on the target language rules rather than on meaning and communicative skills. The immediate consequence of this is that the learner usually acquires very poor oral proficiency in the target language. 2) It orients the learners to presume that the purpose of language learning is not to acquire the competent use of language but to memorize the grammatical system of the target language. 3) It considers language as a form of knowledge which can be measured quantitatively. 4) It assumes that the role learners play in language learning is passive and inactive.

2.2.2. Direct method (DM)

The direct method (DM), which is also known as "Berlitz", originated in the seventeenth century and revived in the 1900s as an alternative to the GTM. It is a second language or foreign language method built upon the studies and observations of child language acquisition. Advocates of the DM believe that adults could learn a second or

foreign language in essentially the same manner as a child learns his or her first language. Therefore, the language instructors should endeavor in every way conceivable to create a natural learning environment within the classroom. Instead of explicit grammar instruction, the major emphasis is on communication. Language instruction in the class is carried out in the target language with little or no reliance on the first language (L1) or on any form of translation. The expectation of DM is that through question and answer dialogues, the target language will gradually be acquired. The principal characteristics and procedures of DM as summarized by Richards and Rodgers (1986) are:

> 1. Classroom instruction was conducted exclusively in the target language.
> 2. Only everyday vocabulary and sentences were taught.
> 3. Oral communication skills were built up in a carefully graded progression organized around question-and-answer exchanges between teachers and students in small, intensive classes.
> 4. Grammar was taught inductively.
> 5. New teaching points were introduced orally.
> 6. Concrete vocabulary was taught through demonstration, objects, and pictures; abstract vocabulary was taught by association of ideas.
> 7. Both speech and listening comprehension were taught.
> 8. Correct pronunciation and grammar were emphasized.
> (Richards and Rodgers, 1986, p. 10)

The guidelines to teach oral language in DM are summarized by Titone (1968). They are:

> Never translate: demonstrate
> Never explain: act
> Never make a speech: ask questions
> Never imitate mistakes: correct
> Never speak with single words: use sentences
> Never speak too much: make students speak much
> Never use the book: use your lesson

Never jump around: follow your plan
Never go too fast: keep the pace of the student
Never speak too slowly: speak normally
Never speak too quickly: speak naturally
Never speak too loudly: speak naturally
Never be impatient: take it easy
(Titone, 1968, p. 101)

Critics also suggest several drawbacks within this DM approach. The first one is that DM requires teachers who are native speakers or who have native-like fluency in the target language. Language teaching in the classroom largely relies upon the instructors' target language skills. No textbook or reference materials are considered to be fundamental in the process of learning. It has high demands from the teachers on the proficiency of the target language and not all teachers are able to cling to this principle. It has also been pointed out that an inflexible following of DM principles is often counterproductive because some of the principles of DM disregard the realities of language instruction in authentic classrooms. Some other problems have also arisen with DM because adult learners do not in fact learn exactly like children do. Most adult learners indicated that they need explicit instruction on grammar and other lexical and phonetic aspects of the target language.

2.2.3. Audiolingual method (ALM)

Neither the GTM nor the DM is based upon any linguistic or psychological theory. Searching for an alternative which has a strong theoretical foundation, second language educators and researchers turned to Bloomfield's linguistic theory and Skinner's behaviorist learning theories in the 1950s. These two theories provided the theoretical foundation and framework for the emergence of the Audiolingual Method (ALM). The

rise of ALM, as claimed by Brooks (1964), transformed language teaching from an art to a science. Brooks believed that this method would enable learners to achieve the mastery of a second or a foreign language effectively and efficiently. ALM was widely adopted for teaching a foreign language at different levels of educational institutions and was used as a theoretical basis for textbook design and curriculum implementation at that period of time. Even today, it is still being used in some parts of the world.

In Bloomfield's linguistic theory, language is viewed as a structural system of related linguistic elements (or linguistic building blocks) for encoding and decoding meanings. The linguistic elements include phonemes, morphemes, words, structures, and sentence types. This structural linguistic theory is established on the following beliefs (Richards and Rodgers, 1986): 1) Linguistic structures or substructures in a language are orderly structured in a large to small substructure sequence and in a law-governed (grammar-ruled) manner. 2) Any language samples can be studied at any structural or substructural level of description. 3) Linguistic structural levels are pyramidally structured. Take phonemic systems for example, they can lead to morphemic systems, and these morphemic systems can then lead to the higher level of systems, such as phrases, clauses, and sentences. Within this structural linguistic theory, learning a language is considered to be mastering the building blocks of the language, understanding the structures and substructures, and internalizing the laws by which these language building blocks are combined, from the finest substructure to the largest substructure of the target language.

One of the most crucial notions in structural linguistic theory, which later became the founding principle of ALM, is the belief that oral language is the sole vehicle for the delivery of language, that is, speech is language. Structural linguists observed two human language phenomena in their studies. One is that many languages that people use do not

have written forms. The other is that we human beings learn to speak before we learn to read and write. Based upon these two observations, they infer that human language is basically what is spoken and only secondarily what is written (Brooks, 1964). Under such belief of human language, it is assumed in language teaching and learning that oral language (or speech) learning should be supreme. This view on the relationship of the spoken and written forms of language challenged the popular traditional view of language and furnished a footing for a new language teaching approach. As soon as structural linguistics established itself as a valid branch of linguistic science, several linguists began to call for putting this theory into language teaching and learning practice. One linguist said, "Language is speech, not writing ... A language is a set of habits ... Teach the language, not about the language ... A language is what its native speakers say, not what someone thinks they ought to say ..." (Rivers, 1964, p. 5).

Another theoretical thought which contributed to the philosophical underpinnings of the ALM is Skinner's behaviorist psychological theories. Skinner and his fellow colleagues believe that they have uncovered the arcanums of all human learning, including language learning. Behavioral psychology, as commented on by Richards and Rodgers (1986), is an empirically based discipline to peruse human behavior. In behavioral psychology, the human being is considered to be a living organism capable of performing a wide range of behaviors. The materialization of these behaviors relies upon three important factors (Skinner, 1967; and Brown, 1980). They are: 1) stimulus, which functions to entice behavior; 2) response, which is an uncontrolled reaction to a stimulus; and 3) reinforcement, which functions to oversee the appropriateness of the response and revitalize or devitalize the repetition of the response in the future. Skinner and his colleagues assume that learning is to transform behaviors through conditioning and mechanical stimulus-response. Amongst the three factors, as they presuppose, reinforcement is the most important in the process of learning because they believe it

enhances the possibility that the behavior will take place again and in due time be developed into a habit. To install this theory into second or foreign language learning, as observed by Richards and Rodgers (1986), is to regard the passive living organism as the language learner, the behavior as verbal communication, the stimulus as what is taught, the response as the learners' reaction to the stimulus, and the reinforcement as the extrinsic or intrinsic motivation for learning the target language. To the behaviorists, the mastery of a language can be characterized as a procurement of a set of appropriate stimulus-response verbal behaviors.

Under the sway of these two branches of study, a number of teaching and learning principles emerged. These principles later became the theoretical foundations of ALM and influenced teaching methodologies in second language education. Rivers (1964) classifies the following as the overruling principles in ALM:

> 1) Foreign language learning is basically a process of mechanical habit formation. Good habits are formed by giving correct responses rather than by making mistakes. By memorizing dialogues and performing pattern drills the chances of producing mistakes are minimized. Language is verbal behavior - that is, the automatic production and comprehension of utterances - and can be learned by inducing the students to do likewise.
> 2) Language skills are learned more effectively if the items to be learned in the target language are presented in spoken form before they are seen in written form. Aural-oral training is needed to provide the foundation for the development of other language skills.
> 3) Analogy provides a better foundation for language learning than analysis. Analogy involves the processes of generalization and discrimination. Explanations of rules are therefore not given until students have practiced a pattern in a variety of contexts and are thought to have acquired a perception of the analogies involved. Drills can enable learners to form correct analogies. Hence the approach to the teaching of grammar is essentially inductive rather than deductive.

> 4). The meanings that the words of a language have for the native speaker can be learned only in a linguistic and cultural context and not in isolation. Teaching a language thus involves teaching aspects of the cultural system of the people who speak the language.
> (Rivers, 1964, p. 19)

The main goal of the ALM is to develop native-like speaking ability in its learners. Translation and reference to the learners' native language in the process of teaching are not sanctioned. In the classrooms and language labs, learners are conditioned to respond correctly to both oral and written stimuli. As language communication is conceived to be a conditioned habit, learners are not granted time to contemplate their responses but are required to respond quickly to the stimulus sentences. Learners perform a reactive role by responding to stimuli, and thus have little power over the content, pace, or style of learning. They are not enlivened to originate interaction, because it is assumed that this may lead to mistakes. ALM is a teacher dominated method. The teacher's role is active and overriding. The teacher models the target language, controls the direction and gait of learning, and monitors and corrects the learners' responses. The teacher must keep the learners attentive by varying drills and tasks and choosing relevant situations to practice structures. Language learning is seen to result from active verbal interaction between the teacher and the learners.

The procedure for a typical ALM English lesson, as identified by Richards and Rodgers (1986) is: 1) At the incipience, learners are asked to hear a model of a dialogue or a conversation which accommodates the major grammatical structures that are the central points of the lecture. They repeat each line of the dialogue independently and simultaneously in chorus after the teacher or the tape recorder. The teacher rivets his or her attention to pronunciation, intonation and fluency of the students. Rectifications on pronunciation and grammar faux pas are made by the teacher. 2) The dialogue or

conversation is learned by memorization. 3) Major grammatical structures are picked from the dialogue and employed as the basis for pattern drill exercises. They are practiced in chorus and individually. Limited explication on grammatical structures would be offered at this stage. 4) At this stage, students are requested to turn to their textbook where the consolidation reading, writing or vocabulary drills are prescribed. 5) After-class activities might carry over to the language laboratory where more dialogue and drill work are completed.

Like GTM, the ALM does not regard language learning as a creative process but merely as mechanical mimicry. The main disadvantage of this approach is that its goals are seldom met by actual teaching practice. During classroom practice, this approach ignores meaning and communication, and only focuses on the linguistic forms. It denies creative responses from the learners, emphasizing only the discovered mechanisms of the target language.

2.2.4. Communicative language teaching (CLT)

The past several decades have witnessed the development of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. This new approach emerged as a result of the advent of new linguistic theories (namely the language as communication theories), and the new findings from second language learning and teaching. This approach aims to produce communicatively competent language learners as opposed to purely linguistically competent language learners. It has been considered by most Western L2 teachers as the preferred contemporary approach to L2 teaching with communicative competence being the key concept.

2.2.4.1. Linguistic foundations for CLT

The concept of language as communication is suggested by Chomsky (1959, 1971, 1975). Chomsky proposes that the linguistic studies of a language should go beyond the hypothetical linguistic structures and levels in the target language as suggested by the structural linguists, to look into the language in action, or when it is actually utilized as an instrument of communication. He is of the opinion that studies of this kind will help us to characterize the abstract abilities speakers possess that enable them to produce grammatically flawless sentences in a language. Chomsky proffers the notion of a "language organ" which he calls the "Language Acquisition Device" (LAD). Little is yet known about it to conclude its full implications in language education, but Bruner (1978a) is convinced that it is a "powerful idea, one that we will want to revisit after other aspects of language become clear" (Bruner, 1978a, p. 21). Bruner understands that linguistic probings on the rules and grammar of a language do not grant us enlightenment about how the language is acquired. To have a grasp of the concept of language acquisition, he proposes that we look into perception, motor skills, concept formation, and social as well as linguistic aspects. Chomsky sees eye to eye with Bruner on this proposition. Chomsky writes,

> ...we must investigate specific domains of human knowledge or systems of belief, determine their character, and study their relation to the belief and personal experience on which they are erected. A system of knowledge and belief results from the interplay of innate mechanisms, genetically determined maturational processes, and interaction with the social and physical environment. The problem is to account for the system constructed by the mind in the course of this interaction. (Chomsky, 1971, p. 21)

Chomsky's views of language (1959, 1971, 1975) indirectly question the value of applying behaviorism to second language teaching. Bruner regards Chomsky's account

of language as contributing a great deal to the field of language education. Bruner praises Chomsky for "freeing us from the paralyzing dogma of the association-imitation-reinforcement paradigm" (Bruner, 1978b, p. 245). However, Chomsky believes that linguistic investigations should only be concerned with the ideal speech situation. An ideal speech situation, as Chomsky defines, is

> an ideal speaker-listener in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitation, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance. (Chomsky, 1965, p. 3)

Chomsky distinguishes two aspects of language in his linguistic theories, namely, "competence" and "performance." By the term competence, he is referring to the underlying knowledge of the grammatical system. By performance, he is referring to the use of that knowledge to communicate. According to Chomsky, if we say someone speaks impeccable English or French, we are insinuating that he or she employs the rules and regulations that govern that language without having any explicit awareness of the underlying system. He or she employs the proper tenses, makes the required morphological changes, chooses the correct masculine or feminine gender, applies the customary word order, and uses the subjunctive when it is pertinent. The underlying erudition of the grammar of the language by the native speaker is his or her linguistic competence. Many linguists disagree with him. Hymes (1972) is one of them. He believes Chomsky's language theory is too narrow and limited.

Hymes (1972) argues that in addition to linguistic competence the native speakers have another rule system while speaking. That is, he or she cognizes intuitively what is socially appropriate or inappropriate and can accommodate his or her language use to such factors as the topic, situation, and human relations involved: in short, he or she possesses

what Hymes calls "communicative competence". Hymes believes that we should include its cultural and social aspects while studying a particular language performance. He holds that one's competence in a language performance is what one needs to know in order to be able to communicate competently in the target language speech community.

Hymes' concept of communicative competence is further developed and enriched in Canale and Swain (1980). They state that communicative competence is made up of four major categories: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence.

By grammatical competence is meant the mastery of the language code. It is the competence that encompasses "knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology" (Canale and Swain, 1980, p. 29). Such competence, as observed by Canale (1983), focuses directly on the knowledge and skill required to understand and express accurately the literal meaning of utterances. This is the type of competence which most of our classroom teaching strives to promote.

Sociolinguistic competence refers to the ability to produce and understand utterances which are appropriate in terms of the context in which they are uttered. It involves a sensitivity to variables such as social status, role, attitude, purpose, degree of formality, social convention and so on. Maley (1984) offers three examples of sociolinguistically incompetent yet grammatically well-formed and correct utterances. They are:

> "Sit down please!" (Spoken to a distinguished guest - but with the intonation pattern reserved for commands.)
> "How old are you?" (Asked of a middle-aged foreign professor one is meeting for the first time.)
> "Why has your face gone red?" (Asked of someone who has just been embarrassed by an insensitive personal question.)

(Maley, 1984, p. 160)

Maley (1984) points out that many communication breakdowns experienced by learners of a second language and a foreign language have their roots in sociolinguistic competence.

Discourse competence concerns students' abilities to tie sentences in stretches of discourse and to originate a meaningful whole out of a series of sentences. Widdowson's example (1978) will illustrate this aspect of communicative competence very well.

> Speaker A: What did the rain do?
> Speaker B: The crops were destroyed by the rain.
> (Widdowson, 1978, p. 2)

The reply is grammatically and sociolinguistically acceptable, but in discourse connection terms, it just plainly does not go properly. "It destroyed the crops." would be an ameliorated response in terms of communicative competence.

The last category of communicative competence is strategic competence. It is described by Canale and Swain as "the verbal and nonverbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or due to insufficient competence" (Canale and Swain, 1980, p. 30). Chomsky, Hymes, Canale and Swain's research and studies provided firm linguistic theories as the foundation for the arrival of CLT.

2.2.4.2. CLT established itself on the recent findings from second language teaching and learning studies

Savignon (1983) did a large survey on second language acquisition research and studies. She found that the role of linguistic, social, cognitive, cultural, and personal factors was very important in language acquisition and suggested second language

teaching should focus on the communication of meaning rather than on the forms and the linguistic structures of the language.

Krashen (1982, 1985) did numerous studies on second language acquisition. He concludes that language acquisition is the essential process involved in our target language proficiency growth. He distinguished the process of acquisition from the process of learning. Acquisition, Krashen believes, is the unconscious development of the target language system. It is, as he argues, the result of using the language for authentic communication purposes. Learning, on the contrary, is a process of conscious organization and reorganization in the students minds of grammatical knowledge in the target language. Learning usually results from classroom instruction, and according to Krashen, it does not lead to language acquisition. Krashen makes clear it is the acquired language system that we usually rely upon in our minds when we generate phrases and sentences during our impromptu 'anguage uses. Krashen believes that the learned language system has little application in the natural language use setting and that it can serve only as a monitor of the output of the acquired system. Krashen and other second language acquisition theorists stress that we master a language through the impromptu use of the language for communicative purposes rather than through practising isolated language and linguistic skills.

Richards and Rodgers (1986) indicate that recent studies on second language acquisition and language teaching along with the whole language movement in the field of education has led the trend of second language teaching to a more communication based approach and has paved the way for the arrival of CLT.

2.2.4.3. Principles, advantages and disadvantages of CLT

The principles of CLT, as summarized from Widdowson (1978), Canale and Swain (1980), Maley (1982, 1984), Canale (1983), Savignon (1983), Richards and Rodgers (1986), Stern (1992), and Wang (1994), are the following:

1. Concentration on use and appropriateness rather than simply on language form (i.e. meaning as well as grammar) (Richards and Rodgers, 1986).
2. A tendency to favor fluency-focused rather than simply accuracy-focused activity (Maley, 1982, and Wang 1994).
3. An attention to communication tasks to be achieved through the language rather than simple exercises on the language (Canale and Swain, 1980, and Stern, 1992).
4. An emphasis on student initiative and interaction, rather than simply on teacher-centered direction (Canale, 1983, and Canale and Swain ,1980).
5. A sensitivity to learners' differences rather than a "lockstep" approach (in which all learners in the class proceed through the same materials at the same speed) (Maley, 1984).
6. An awareness of variation in language use rather than simply attention to the language (Savignon, 1983).

The implications for language teaching of the above CLT principles include the following (Widdowson, 1978; Canale and Swain, 1980; Maley, 1982, 1984; Canale, 1983; Savignon, 1983; Richards and Rodgers, 1986; Stern, 1992; and Wang, 1994): 1) The teachers' roles will be different from those in the GTM, DM, and ALM. Teachers will no longer be regarded as possessing knowledge which they hand out to their students in weekly or daily measurement. Instead, they are required to set up tasks and activities in which the learners play the major part. The teachers need to monitor these activities and to modify and adjust them as time goes by. 2) The students' roles will also be different from those in GTM, DM, and ALM. They are no longer anticipated to follow the lesson torpidly, but are required to involve themselves as competent participants to undertake all the learning activities inside and outside the classroom. 3) The teaching materials will

need to be changed to reflect the real use of the target language. 4) The strategies applied to the teaching materials will be reconsidered. Teaching strategies and approaches need to be task-oriented rather than exercise-centered. 5) The classroom activities should be student centered. Interaction among students in class is favored. The essence of CLT is an accentuation on practice as a way of developing communicative competence.

The main advantages of the CLT, as seen by Widdowson (1978), Canale and Swain (1980), Maley (1982, 1984), Canale (1983), Savignon (1983), Richards and Rodgers (1986), Stern (1992), and Wang (1994), are: 1) CLT approaches are more inclined to foster the four kinds of communicative competence in their learners than the more purely language-centered approaches. 2) CLT approaches grant their learners the freedom to utilize the target language for their own purposes earlier than the other approaches do. This will spur the learners to put more time and effort in the target language learning. 3) CLT approaches are more prone to equip the learners with the appurtenant competence to deal with the language in the real world, since CLT emphasizes the real language utilization. Despite the above advantages, there are still several potential disadvantages in CLT. As suggested by Widdowson (1978), Canale and Swain (1980), Maley (1982, 1984), Canale (1983), Savignon (1983), Richards and Rodgers (1986), Stern (1992), and Wang (1994), they are: 1) CLT approaches tend to make heavy demands upon the language teachers and therefore, they need to be competent in the target language, and are required to possess great vim, adaptability, and pedagogical insights. CLT does not offer the security of a textbook to the teachers, whereas, in the traditional approaches it is sufficient for the teachers to follow the prescription offered by the textbook. CLT demands that language teachers select, adapt, and produce original materials that they are going to utilize in the classes. 2) As CLT appears to confront the traditional practice and will often confound language learners and older language teachers at the initial stages, it is inclined to meet with resistance. 3) It is more strenuous to

conduct an evaluation than with the traditional approaches. We are all aware that it is relatively easy to test whether a student has learned the present perfect or singular and plural forms, but it is less easy to evaluate his or her competence in solving a problem, issuing an invitation, or negotiating a successful agreement.

2.2.4.4. CLT as a major approach in L2 teaching

Despite the disadvantages of CLT and the snarls to implement a CLT program, CLT is still a preferred approach in language teaching in North America. In the past, most methodologies have focused upon grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Now this new CLT seeks to produce communicatively competent language learners as opposed to the simply linguistically competent language learners. It has been considered by most Western L2 theorists as the preferred contemporary approach to L2 teaching with communicative competence being the key concept.

2.2.5. Summary

In this part of the dissertation, prevalent second and foreign language teaching approaches were identified, described and reviewed in great detail. The enumerated recountings of the miscellaneous methods and approaches in second language teaching will help me and the readers to comprehend the research participant's background, past teaching experiences and present pedagogical philosophy.

2.3. Whole language philosophy

The term "whole language" does not arise from writings by linguists, but from works done by educators and classroom teachers. Educators, such as Harste and Burke (1977), Ken and Yetta Goodman (1981), and Watson (1989), utilize this term to refer to pedagogical philosophy and practice in helping young children to become readers and writers. These educators and teachers assume that the language we are using is a coherent whole, and any attempt which tries to fragment it into separate and manipulatable parts, such as grammatical patterns, vocabulary items, or semantic or phonetic units, will demolish it. They argue that language should be kept as a whole, and if it cannot be so, then it is not language anymore.

Harste and Burke (1977) were the first persons who used this term when they described three different reading theories: phonics, skills and whole language. Phonics theory, they believed, essentially regarded reading as a process of turning letters into sounds. Skills theory, on the other hand, presumed reading was a hierarchy of skills which included phonics, word recognition, and comprehension skills. Only whole language, as Harste and Burke (1977) pointed out, defined reading as a psycholinguistic process within which the reader interacts with the text to construct meaning. They accepted Goodman's view that reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game and believed that in the process of reading the reader will: 1) predict what comes next; 2) sample cues from the semantic, syntactic, and graphophonic systems; and 3) use his or her general knowledge of the world, of the language, and purposes for reading to interact with the text to construct meaning.

The term whole language has come to mean different things to different people (Goodman, Smith, Meredith and Goodman, 1987) in recent years. The following are some of the definitions that I collected in my process of writing this literature review:

> Whole language is clearly a lot of things to a lot of people; it's not a dogma to be narrowly practiced. It is a way of bringing together a view of language, a view of learning, and a view of people, in particular two special groups of people: kids and teachers. (Goodman, 1986, p. 5)

> ...those who advocate a whole language approach emphasize the importance of approaching reading and writing by building upon the language and experiences of the child. (Weaver, 1988, p. 44)

> Whole language: written and oral language in connected discourse in a meaningful contextual setting. (Anderson, 1984, p. 616)

> It is built on practical experience and the research of educators, linguists and psychologists. Whole language utilizes all the child's previous knowledge and his/her growing awareness of the aspects of language. (Members of the Southside Teacher Support Group, Edmonton Public Schools, 1985, p. 1)

> First and foremost, whole language is a professional theory, an explicit theory in practice. ... Whole language weaves together a theoretical view of language, language learning, and learning into a particular stance on education. (Edelsky, Altwerger, and Flores, 1991, p. 7)

These definitions may appear to evince a dearth of sameness, but they all do not go beyond the boundaries of an acceptable domain of whole language. After a careful review of these definitions and my reading of Ken and Yetta Goodman (1981), Watson (1989) and Weaver (1990), I have begun to accept Weaver's broader definition (1990) of whole language and have come to believe that whole language is not a method, nor a collection of strategies, techniques, or materials. I concur with Weaver (1990) in saying that whole language is a philosophy or a belief system which is about the nature of learning and how it can be fostered in classrooms and practice. Like Weaver (1990), I may also use the term "whole language approach" in this dissertation to refer to a teaching or a learning

environment in which the activities reflect the whole language philosophy. I have no intention to use a single activity or set of activities to define whole language.

2.3.1. Whole language: An evolving philosophy

The philosophy of whole language is solidly rooted in scientific research and in the humanistic philosophical theories. From the humanistic philosophic theories, whole language extracted a respect and positive attitude toward all learners regardless of their ages, abilities, and backgrounds. From the scientific research, whole language obtained and utilized the findings in psychology, linguistics, psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics that concerns how students learn, how they learn language, how they make use of language to learn, and the influences of the individual, peers, teachers, and various other variables in their process of learning. Whole language is being shaped a great deal by these two and gradually the two are being synthesized into one practical philosophy to steer teachers' decision making in classrooms. Goodman and Martens (1993) presented an overall review on the theoretical foundations of whole language philosophy. A summary of some principal points from their works (Goodman and Martens, 1993) provides readers with a brief account of the theoretical and scientific foundations of whole language and major characteristics of whole language.

An understanding of the emergence and the later flourishing of whole language will require us to go back to the pedagogical thoughts of Comenius. Comenius, a great ancient educator, was an early advocate of the concept of "learner-centered" or "child-centered" curriculum. He believed that the child will not learn unless he or she enjoys the learning experiences. He said, "To entice witty children to it (the book), that they may not conceit a torment to be in the school, but dainty fare" (Comenius, 1887, p. xv). Comenius also advocated that students should be the central concern in the process of

teaching. He held that teachers should be able to discern the needs and expectations of their students and make sure that their teaching "will be clear, ... if whatever is taught and learned, be not obscure, or confused, but apparent, distinct, and articulate; ... will be true, if nothing be taught but such as is beneficial to one's life" (Comenius, 1887, p. xii). Comenius also seemed to be aware that the relationship between teaching and learning is not isomorphic, but symbiotic, with each influencing the other. All these pedagogical views from Comenius strongly influenced whole language and later became an important constituent part of the humanistic foundation of whole language philosophy.

Dewey was an American educator and philosopher whose works (1916, 1929, 1938, 1943) questioned the nature of the child in the school setting. He explored the meaning and the roles of experience, democracy, and activity as the young student inquired into significant issues and problems and foresaw great importance for blending all subjects in school together. He wrote,

> we do not have a series of stratified earths, one which is mathematical, another physical, another historical, and so on... All studies grow out of relations in the one great common world, his studies are naturally unified ... Relate school to life, and all studies are of necessity correlated...if school is related as a whole to life as a whole, its various aims and ideals -- culture, discipline, information, utility -- cease to be variants. (Dewey, 1943, p. 91)

Dewey saw language as an important tool for young students to learn new content area knowledge, and also believed that the content area knowledge development in children would bring about their language growth. He said,

> The child who has a variety of materials and facts wants to talk about them, and his language becomes more refined and full, because it is controlled and informed by realities. Reading and writing, as well as the oral use of language, may be taught on this basis. It can be done in a related way, as

> the outgrowth of the child's social desire to recount his experiences and get in return the experiences of others. (Dewey, 1943, p. 56)

Dewey also viewed the child as strong, capable, and eager to learn. He believed that learning should start from where the learner is. He emphasized that teaching should be child centered and that the teacher should be responsible to assist every child to grow as much as possible in whatever directions are most significant for the child. Dewey's thoughts on curriculum development and the relationship between language and content knowledge provided a theoretical framework for the integration of subjects in whole language.

The Swiss educator, Piaget, investigated the genesis of our cognition and tried to answer the question: how do we come to cognize concepts, ideas, and moralities? In his research, he observed that children could be dynamically involved in comprehending their world and in striving to discover answers to their own questions about the world and resolving the problems that the world put out for them. He also found that children do not pause for someone to impart knowledge to them, but acquire concepts and ideas through their own interactions with the outside physical world and construct their own knowledge framework of the world in their minds. Piaget's research contributed a lot to the conception that children are competent to play an active role in their language and knowledge development.

Whole language adherents value the views and theories of the above three theorists. They view learners as strong, capable, and eager to learn and believe that learning should start from where the children are and should be child centered. They see common patterns in the human learning process, but they also expect and identify differences among learners from different cultures, value systems, experiences, needs, interests and languages. Whole language educators value differences among learners.

The purpose of education is not to make students conform to a uniform social norm or behavior but to help students reach their potential. In a typical whole language program, learners will feel empowered because they are invited to take ownership of their learning and are given maximum support in developing their own objectives that satisfy them.

The Russian psychologist, Vygotsky (1962, 1978), developed the concept of "Zone of proximal development" (ZPD). He acknowledged that children are capable of taking the responsibility for their own conceptual development, but he also regarded the role that the teachers play in children's growth as of vital importance. Vygotsky pointed out the fact that children do not learn or progress in isolation. He argued that children will only acquire concepts and progress in language and cognitive development under a supportive environment. His recognition of the great significance of a supportive environment in children's growth has important implications for whole language. Whole language teachers accept his concept of child growth and are willing to play the role of mediators who facilitate learners' interaction with their peers and the world. Besides facilitating growth in their students, whole language teachers are also known as professionals who understand children, learning and teaching. Vygotsky's research findings on the relationship of children's peer interaction and cognitive growth provide reliable foundations for group work activities in the whole language classroom.

Halliday, an applied linguist, studied the relationship between language learning and language use. He calls language learning "learning how to mean" because he believes that in the process of learning language we learn the social meanings language represents (Halliday, 1975). Halliday (1984) describes three kinds of language learning that happen simultaneously: learning language, learning through language, and learning about language. He establishes the notion that we learn through language while we learn language. Whole language builds upon this notion and proposes a dual curriculum, that

is, that every lesson is an opportunity for both linguistic and cognitive development. In other words, children's language and thinking develop at the same time while they develop concepts and schema. Halliday's notion has a great impact on the integration of language learning with other subject areas in the development of whole language curriculum.

Whole language, as observed by Weaver (1990, 1991, 1994) and Weaver, Chaston, and Peterson (1993), is not a static theory but an evolving philosophy. It is sensitive to new knowledge and insights and will absorb new perspectives and findings of research in its evolution.

2.3.2. Principles in whole language

As I mentioned earlier, the term whole language projects different things to different people. A careful review of some of the definitions that I collected in the process of writing this dissertation indicate that though these definitions may appear to have a lack of sameness, still they all do not go beyond the boundaries of an acceptable domain of whole language. Weaver (1990, 1991, 1994) and Weaver, Chaston, and Peterson (1993) explored this commonly acceptable domain of whole language and uncovered some basic principles of whole language. For the sake of helping me to more easily explore the research questions and to provide a comprehensive overview of the whole language philosophy, I will summarize some of the fundamental principles in whole language as identified in Weaver (1990, 1991, 1994) and Weaver, Chaston, and Peterson (1993). In order to provide a clear and terse description of whole language principles, I will model Weaver (1990, 1991, 1994) who grouped the identified basic principles in whole language under four major categories: 1) learning and the learner; 2) curriculum development; 3) teachers' roles in teaching; and 4) assessment and evaluation in whole

language. The danger in producing a list like the one below is that it may make whole language philosophy seem simplistic. It is difficult to provide a detailed synthesis which can show the complexity of different schools of thought related to whole language. The purpose of this list is to provide a general overview of the whole language philosophy.

2.3.2.1. Basic principles of whole language under the learning and learner category

This category encompasses perspectives of what learning is and how it can be accomplished within a whole language stand. Whole language emphasizes the roles of motivation and social interaction in learning. This understanding of learning has been influenced strongly by the works of Piaget, Vygotsky, Dewey, Rosenblatt, and many others. These works and recent studies in education have given rise to the following principles on learning and learners:

Principle # one: *Learning takes place when the learner is actively interacting with other people, with books, and with other objects and materials in context. Meaning is constructed by the learners themselves, not imposed by others.* In whole language, learners are seen as actively and enthusiastically engaged in language, thinking and the construction of meaning and concepts. This principle is very different from the common sense traditional view of learning in which the learners are required to passively do drill exercises, practice skills, memorize facts and accumulate information.

Principle # two: *Significant and enduring learning is learning that the learners considered as functional and purposeful.* Learning, as it is conjectured in whole language, is significant and lasting only when it interests the learners, meets the learners' needs, and furthers their present purposes.

Principle # three: *The environment for learning must be learner-sensitive, learner-friendly, and make the learners feel confident about themselves.* In order to engage the students in learning with their hearts and souls, they must be put in an environment where they dare to risk, and to be different. The learners are given the freedom to experience and risk without fearing negative feedback or criticism from the teacher and peer students.

Principle # four: *Though there are common cognitive developmental patterns among learners, the nature and course of each individual learner's learning and cognitive development are still different.* This implies that each learner learns and develops with his or her own unique speed.

Principle # five: *Social collaboration among students is the best facilitator of learning.* In other words, learning is facilitated by and within a community of learners. Whole language believes that an individual's learning will be elevated by social collaboration, that is, by opportunities to work with the teacher and other students, to brainstorm, to share, and try out ideas, get feedback, and to obtain help. Whole language does not encourage competition among learners. It regards social collaboration among the learners as the best facilitator of learning.

2.3.2.2. Basic principles of whole language under the curriculum development category

Principle # six: *The curriculum should consist of opportunities to engage students in various kinds of authentic and natural reading, writing, discussion, experimentation and research that learners voluntarily do in and outside of school, rather than an emphasis on the mastery of minimal skills and factual information.*

Principle # seven: *The curriculum is decided by and negotiated among the teachers and students.* A whole language curriculum is a negotiated curriculum. A negotiated curriculum is often founded on the topics and themes of particular interest to the students. The teacher can determine in what respect and in what instances the learners can make decisions. Most curricular decisions in a whole language oriented program should be made by the teacher and students together, which includes both long and short term planning. Curriculum decisions should take into account the students' interests, the requirements of the externally imposed curriculum, the resources and many other factors.

Principle # eight: *Language learning should be functional and purposeful for the learner, and language should be kept natural and whole rather than be fragmented into parts in the process of language acquisition.* In a whole language program, beginning readers will be assisted to read rhymes, songs and stories rather than the unnatural language text known as "basal readers". Learners will read picture books and other authentic works of literary quality rather than the contextless bits and pieces of language textbooks and workbooks. Students will write authentic stories, poems, letters and other types of writing.

Principle # nine: *Explicit teaching concerning the parts of language will take place in the context of the whole, and in the context of the students' needs.* Explicit teaching on the linguistic aspects of the language will not follow a predetermined sequence, but will occur in response to the learners' interests and needs, to their actions and comments, and to the teacher's observations. Skills are taught not only in the context of the whole, but as the need for them becomes apparent in the course of engaging students in authentic learning experiences. The need for the parts knowledge, such as each individual skill, will be apparent in the task the learner is trying to accomplish, so the locus of teaching will move from whole to part and back to whole.

2.3.2.3. Basic principles of whole language under the teachers' roles category

This category encompasses whole language principles on the responsibilities of the teachers, and their roles in the process of helping learners to learn. They are:

Principle # ten: *The teachers serve as role models to demonstrate what it means to be literate persons and lifelong learners.* In whole language, teachers' roles are not limited to dispensing information, assigning homework and evaluating students' performances. Teachers should demonstrate that they are themselves passionate readers, writers and learners and as well as risk-takers and decision-makers in order to foster their students' development of literacy and learning.

Principle # eleven: *Teachers are facilitators. They are responsible for structuring a supportive and caring community of learners.* In whole language, teachers provide students with learning experiences a d freedom to explore the world, assist their students to consider and acquire the resources needed for their studies, and direct their students to acquire useful strategies and skills for carrying out the tasks of their choice. They will respond to all types of needs from their students. Whole language teachers believe that they are also responsible to create a supportive community of learners. They believe that teachers should not be encouraged to develop a climate in which competition and comparison are dominant in their classroom, but on the contrary, they are invited to create a supportive community of learners where everyone, including the teacher, is free to take risks without fear of negative consequences, and in which everyone is supported by others.

Principle # twelve: *Teachers treat students as capable and developing, not as incapable or deficient. Teachers should also collaborate and share responsibility for*

curricular decision-making with their students. In whole language, teachers do not present themselves as ultimate authorities, but as models for risk-taking and offering challenges to their students to stimulate their growth. Teachers respond positively to what their students can do and cannot do. They will not penalize errors to discourage risk-taking and individual thinking in their students. They also collaborate and share responsibility for curricular decision-making with their students to encourage them to take ownership of and responsibility for their own learning in the expectation that this will empower students to become independent, self-motivated learners and doers.

2.3.2.4. Basic principles of whole language under the assessment and evaluation category

Principle # thirteen: *Evaluation is accomplished through numerous assessments of various types, and it is happening all the time in the process of learning and teaching*. In whole language, evaluation of students is not based upon a single test. In fact, tests such as the standardized tests are considered not to be capable of evaluating students' real academic abilities. Recorded observations are used as the major tools for whole language assessment. Besides observations, many other methods are also used, such as periodic performance samples (of writing or reading, for example), records from meeting and talking with the student, inventories and questionnaires, dialogue journals and learning logs, and student generated records. In whole language, teachers make observations every day when their students engage in various learning experiences both in and out of the classroom. The data from these observations should be used as a basis for making decisions about how to support students' learning, as well as for evaluation of the students' performance. Assessment data is gathered primarily while the learner is engaged in authentic learning experiences, not in an intense test situation.

Principle # fourteen: *Students and teacher self-evaluation is also considered to be a significant constituent of assessment and evaluation. Assessment is essentially learner-referenced.* In whole language, self-evaluation should be practiced by both students and teachers. The outcomes of this evaluation can serve as a basis for future decision-making and goal-setting. In whole language, assessment is not norm-referenced or criterion-referenced, but learner-referenced. In learner-referenced assessment, the learner's present accomplishments are compared with his or her past accomplishments. The result of the assessment is not used to compare with those of the other peers for the purpose of competition. It is used as a reference to trace the student's cognitive growth and development. This principle suggests that each learner's unique development should be respected.

2.3.3. Whole language, a reflection of the post-modern paradigm of thinking

The above identified principles of whole language reflect a new paradigm of thinking, a new set of assumptions about the nature of reality, which many writers (Weaver, 1985, 1991, 1994) call the "post-modern" paradigm. This new paradigm of thinking differs greatly from the basic assumptions of the dominant reductionistic, mechanistic, and transmission paradigm of thinking in the Western world.

In the reductionistic, mechanistic, and transmission paradigm of thinking, teaching is controlled by the program developers and the teachers and involves only the mastery of isolated skills, strategies, and factual information. The educational foundation for this paradigm is behaviorism, where learning is regarded as correct habit formation. Teaching is deficit-driven, which means that it is the teachers' duty is to provide what the learners do not know and discover what the learners cannot do so as to fill their knowledge gaps and eliminate their weakness.

Weaver (1985, 1991) provides a brief description of the reductionistic, mechanistic, and transmission paradigm and the post modern (which she calls "constructivist") paradigm. Her description places emphasis on the contrasting principles of these two paradigms of thinking which are relevant to teaching and learning. Here, I will summarize her view points in Table One (see next page).

In contrast to the reductionistic, mechanistic, and transmission paradigm of thinking, the post-modern paradigm believes realities or knowledge exists in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them (Guba, 1990). The essence of this paradigm is an emphasis on the social interactions. Meaning, as it is believed in the post-modern, is constructed when human beings interact with each other, or with external reality. Knowledge is affected and created in the context of the whole. Livdahl (1995) summarizes this emerging paradigm's view on education in the following three sentences,

> 1. Learning is a constructive process in which learners make sense of their environments by experiencing, exploring, hypothesizing, predicting, testing, and synthesizing.
> 2. Language is integral to the learning process.
> 3. Learning occurs in the social context.
> (Livdahl, 1995, p. 10)

This new paradigm can be described as holistic, constructivist and transactional. The arrival of this new paradigm provided the climate that can nurture the growth of whole language.

Table One: Weaver's description of the two paradigms (1985, 1991)

The reductionistic, mechanistic, and transmission paradigm	The post modern (or the "constructivist") paradigm
1. Reality is static. It can be divided and reduced to its very tiny constituent parts.	1. Reality is not static, it changes all of the time. Social reality is fundamentally relations and relationships and not parts.
2. Everything can be understood through the studying of the smallest constituent parts.	2. Anything can be understood, but partially and temporarily, through investigating the processes it ceaselessly undergoes and the relationships into which it enters.
3. The whole is the sum of its constituent parts; it can be understood by understanding the separate parts.	3. The whole is more than the sum of the parts; the parts can be understood only in the context of the whole.
4. Weakness in any of the constituent parts inevitably will affect the operation of the whole.	4. The whole can often overpower or adequately make up for the weakness of the parts.
5. Meaning resides in the external reality (such as in a text).	5. Meaning is constructed by human beings as they transact with the external reality.
6. Knowledge is objective, and reality is objectively knowable.	6. Knowledge is both affected by, and created by, the observer or knower.
7. Because knowledge is objective, it is "out there", we should be able to transmit it to others.	7. Knowledge is not objective or static, but socially and individually constructed; it develops through transactions of various kinds.

2.3.4. Critiques of whole language

After several decades of being practiced in educational institutions in North America, there are many new observations and criticisms about whole language in its literature.

In the area of assessment and evaluation, Malicky (1991) suggests that whole language promotes the notion of replacing the selective tests and examinations with developmentally oriented evaluations based on teachers' continuous assessment. She observes that when students put everything they do out in the open for their teachers during the process of evaluation, they will let their guards down completely. This, as she points out, may not empower students, but on the contrary may subject students to a more intensive and penetrating form of power and social control.

Church, Portelli, MacInnis, Vibert and Kelly (1995) offered a very critical view of whole language in their recent collaborative paper. Portelli suggests that whole language promotes a kind of soft liberal individualism in our students. He points out that the danger of this kind of individualism is that it will lead our students to the illusion that freedom has no limits and any individual choice is acceptable.

As to the whole language practice in some schools, MacInnis (1995) seems to agree with Delpit (1988) in saying that whole language practice offers middle-class students an opportunity to demonstrate what they learned at home while depriving minority and special needs students of the explicit instruction they need.

Vibert and Kelly (1995) believe that whole language views knowledge and social reality in an apolitical manner. They indicate that it is naive to think of pedagogical philosophy this way in an unequal and unjust society.

In the end of the paper, Church, Portelli, MacInnis, Vibert and Kelly (1995) suggest that researchers and educators should move beyond the current superficial arguments about whole language versus skills-based models to the discussions about the politics of literacy education in an unequal and unjust world.

2.4. Whole language and second language education

According to Rigg (1991), the earliest study of whole language research with second language (L2) learners commenced almost at the same time as it did with first language (L1) learners. Still the literature about whole language with second language teaching and learning is very limited. This, I conclude, is because of the fact that second language teaching and learning has always been placed in a subsidiary status in the school curriculums. The literature suggests that Yetta Goodman (1980) was the first person who studied second language teaching and learning from the whole language philosophy. She investigated the print awareness of preschool preliterate English as a Second Language (ESL) children and found that even children who were in essence non-speakers of the English language could read English print in the related surrounding environment. She suggested that whole language principles may be pertinent to second language learners. Hudelson (1984), another second language education researcher, employed repeated interviews and observations to investigate ESL children's reading development in English language. The outcome of her research is summarized as follows:

1) Children with little or no knowledge of English can read simple English language print.

2) ESL children can write English for various purposes even in the early stages in their development of English language if they are permitted to do so.
3) The experiential and cultural background of ESL children has a strong influence on their reading comprehension.

The findings of research seem to imply that in order to produce competent speakers, readers, and writers of English language among ESL children, the teachers should:

1) invite ESL children to interact with the authentic language environment,
2) apply their background knowledge for literacy experiences,
3) structure meaningful contexts in which children can relate and respond, and
4) accept that mistakes are part of the process of the ESL students' language development and that this acceptance plays an important role in children's development and acquisition of a second language.

Rupp (1986) showed that whole language principles had been fortuitously incorporated into a number of ESL activities in an elementary school. These activities included: daily morning presentations that function as a medium for reacting, discussing, and participating in other student group activities; squiggle writing, in which students were given written squiggles which they expanded into a picture and story; and the employment of resource reference books and materials for students to work on individual or group projects. Rupp found that the second language students in these schools were making satisfactory progress and benefited a great deal from the above mentioned whole language oriented activities. He concluded in his research that the whole language strategies were appropriate for second language learners.

Moore (1990) conducted a case study that recapitulates an ESL child's experience of learning English language under the support of a whole language oriented ESL teacher.

The teacher, after using an individualized discourse technique and autobiographical writing tasks with him, found remarkable progress appeared in the child's English language speech and written assignments. Moore's study strengthens the meaningfulness of using individualized, whole language activities when educating bilingual or second language learners.

Flemming (1990) documented a study in which he spent three weeks observing the teaching and learning of ESL children in elementary schools in New Zealand. From these observations, he suggests that the major variables considered to be definitive in determining the English language development of these ESL children are: 1) the teacher's high expectation of students' English language accomplishment; 2) a rich, and supportive whole language environment; and 3) a nurturing classroom climate. This study seems to imply that the whole language principles are applicable to ESL elementary school students and this pedagogical practice is transferable to other elementary school students in the United States and Canada.

The above studies make it known that the variables necessary to support and strengthen second language learning are mirrored in the whole language principles of language learning and teaching, and the use of whole language principles in second language classrooms enhances the target language development among the learners. The literature also suggests that many researchers and educators (Heald-Taylor, 1987; Rigg, 1991; Freeman and Freeman, 1992; Hedley, 1993; Reyes, 1993; Whitemore and Crowell, 1994; Arthur, 1995; and Lim and Watson, 1995) indicate that whole language principles are applicable to the second language classroom. I also found in the literature review that little research has been completed on the substantial application of the whole language principles in second language classrooms.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Alice: Where I come from, people study what they are not good at in order to be able to do what they are good at.

Mad Hatter: We only go around in circles in Wonderland; but we always end up where we started. Would you mind explaining yourself?

Alice: Well, grown-ups tell us to find out what we did wrong, and never do it again.

Mad Hatter: That's odd! It seems to me that in order to find out about something you have to study it. And when you study it you should become better at it. Why should you want to become better at something and then never do it again? But please continue.

Alice: Nobody ever tells us to study the right things we do. We're only supposed to learn from the wrong things. But we are permitted to study the right things other people do. And sometimes we're even told to copy them.

Mad Hatter: That's cheating!

Alice: You're quite right, Mr. Hatter. I do live in a topsy-turvy world. It seems like I have to do something wrong first, in order to learn from that what not to do. And then, by not

doing what I'm not supposed to do, perhaps I'll be right.

But I'd rather be right the first time, wouldn't you?

(From Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, quoted in Fortin, 1991, p. 41)

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the philosophical underpinnings, characteristics, and methodological implications of qualitative (naturalistic) research as it applies to this study. The methodology is described and a rationale is provided for the use of selected research techniques.

The research design, a case study utilizing a qualitative research approach in orientation and methodology, includes interviews and observations as major methods of obtaining data.

3.2. The philosophical orientation of qualitative research

Research, as a way of expanding our understanding, according to the literature, is motivated by our basic human compulsion to understand ourselves, our social affairs, and the physical world that surrounds us. The research questions and the research methods that researchers employ are deeply embedded in their own values and visions of the world. Researchers with different values and visions will often have different conceptions of what research is and how to conduct research. The diversity in the conceptions of the ways that knowledge can be sought is directly due to our pluralistic views of the world and social affairs. Recognition of the diversity in methodologies, just as Popkewitz

(1984) indicates, enables us to consider a different methodology as having different sets of assumptions, commitments, procedures, and theories of social affairs. Disagreement among the different methodologies is not largely on the superficial technical issues but on the fundamental issues such as values, visions of social order, the nature of the human being, and the essence of social institutions.

In the present human and social science inquiry methodology, there exists a dichotomy of opposite orientations. On one end, there is an inquiry method which is established on the basis of the scientific method of natural science, namely the quantitative method (positivistic paradigm). On the other, is the qualitative method (non-positivistic paradigm), which is based on the concepts of our human intentionality, interpretation and reflection. This duality, as I see it, offers no chance for any reconciliation.

Careful reading about research methodology provides the following understanding to me about the nature of the two opposing orientations. I have a sense that assumptions about knowing and knowledge underlying the qualitative research paradigm (non-positivistic) are fundamentally different from those underpinning the quantitative (rationalistic, scientific, or positivistic) research paradigm. Guba (1981) and Locke (1989) identify the three most salient assumptions underlying the qualitative research paradigm and claim that it is these assumptions which make qualitative research fundamentally different from quantitative research.

The first basic assumption underlying the qualitative research paradigm is that reality is a multiple phenomenon. The researchers in the qualitative research paradigm believe that there is no single reality in the social world upon which inquiry can converge. The social world, as they believe, exists only as a set of multiple realities with behavior driven by people's moment to moment personal vision of the world (Guba, 1981; Locke, 1989). But they also believe that people all share some degree of intersubjective overlap

of their individual, very personal realities. This overlapping is due to the collective social life, but also, as indicated by Locke, it is closely bound to a particular time, a particular place, and a particular individual (Locke, 1989). Therefore, "they are never perfectly congruent and, as lovers and parents sadly learn, they are never perfectly shared" (Locke, 1989, p. 4). Therefore, a qualitative inquiry or research will "diverge rather than converge as more and more is known, and that all 'parts' of reality are interrelated so that the study of any one part necessarily influences all other parts" (Guba, 1981, p. 77).

The second assumption is based on the nature of the relationship between the researcher (or inquirer) and the research object (participant). The researchers in the qualitative research paradigm believe that the inquirer-subject relationship is interactive. Contrary to this, quantitative research rests on the assumption that the researcher can maintain a distance from the objects of the study. That is to say that the relationship between the researcher and the objects under study is basically one of independence. The researcher is able to identify and summarize truth statements from the research without any personal bias, prejudice, and preconception. Qualitative research, on the contrary, recognizes that the inquirer and the respondents must interact and that in so doing each influences the other (Guba, 1981). Knowing, in the qualitative paradigm, "requires some forms of active involvement with people" (Locke, 1989, p. 4). For example, in order to uncover how a second language teacher uses whole language perspective to teach in the classroom, the researcher must actually be present in the classroom to observe and to interview the teacher and the students.

The third assumption of qualitative research is on the nature of "truth statements". The quantitative research paradigm is based on the assumption that time-enduring and context-free generalizations are possible. It is frequently asserted by the researchers in the quantitative research paradigm that inquiry would have no point if time-enduring and

context-free generalizations could not be made. The qualitative research paradigm rests on the assumptions that generalizations are impossible and at best what the researchers can hope for are "working hypotheses" that closely relate to a specific context. The goal of the qualitative research paradigm is to develop "idiographic knowledge, focusing on differences between objects as frequently and with as much interest as on similarities" (Guba, 1981, p. 77). In the qualitative research paradigm, researchers not only assert that human subjective perceptions and value cannot be free from the inquiry, they magnify them. Since research in social sciences is done by human beings not by sanitized inhuman robots, the result must be value-bound. Researchers insist that inquiry should be grounded in actual experience. Description and reflection are valued more than generalizations.

It has also been pointed out that within the quantitative paradigm, human participants are relegated to the end products of biology whose feelings, thoughts and actions can be determined by a complex set of causal factors. The meaningfulness and the richness of human experiences are ignored while the insignificant regularities and predictability of those experiences are brought to the forefront. The advantage of viewing human nature in such a manner, as Biddle (1981) points out, is its ease of attaching research to the solving of political and social issues in society. The qualitative research paradigm, on the other hand, does not perceive human beings as objects of biology, but as complex agents of intention who manifest an intelligent consciousness that creates meaning out of experience. Patton points out that qualitative research in social science is,

> an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there. This understanding is an end in itself, so that it is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future necessarily, but to understand the nature of that setting--what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what's going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that

> particular setting--and in the analysis to be able to communicate that faithfully to others who are interested in that setting... The analysis strives for depth of understanding. (Patton, 1985, p. 1)

The characteristics of qualitative research as summarized by Bogdan and Biklen (1992) are:

> (1) Qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument.
> (2) Qualitative research is descriptive.
> (3) Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or products.
> (4) Qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively.
> (5) Meaning is of essential concern to the qualitative approach.
> (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992)

In this study, I aimed to observe the participating teacher's classroom, investigate his language pedagogy, specifically his use of whole language principles in the classroom, and his pedagogical philosophy. The completion of this research required me to conduct an in-depth investigation of the participating teacher's academic background, previous teaching and learning experience and actually go to the participating teacher's classroom. To uncover the many deep, very powerful, yet at the same time subtle components of the participating teacher's pedagogical philosophy, a qualitative (or naturalistic) case study research approach was chosen. This approach was appropriate to my research project because it helped me to seek answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings. It also encourages descriptive and comprehensive data collection, explanation and documentation, extension of insight and meaning, and inductive reasoning to arrive at the discovery of new relationships, concepts, and understanding (Merriam, 1988). By using this research approach, I was able to have a more detailed and deeper account of the subject being investigated.

3.3. Case study

The term case study is used in a variety of ways. It has a long history of use in disciplines such as medicine, law, anthropology, political science, and psychology. Typically they are intensive investigations of single cases which serve both to identify and describe basic phenomena, as well as provide the basis for subsequent theory-development. Smith (1982) states that the assumptions underlying the use of a case study are similar to those of the qualitative research paradigm and observes that,

> the context has great impact on social behavior ... the subjectivity of the researcher is not only inevitable but provides the only means of knowing, and control is instituted through multiple perspectives and methods. (Smith, 1982, p. 205)

More recently, it has been stated that "education has recognized the advantage of using a case study approach for better understanding the process or dynamics of certain aspects of practice" (Merriam, 1985, p. 204). As one form of qualitative research methodology, Stake defines the case study as the investigation of a bounded system, emphasizing the unity and wholeness of that system, but confined to those aspects which are relevant to the research problem at the time (Stake, 1978). In other words, a case study in education is an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a program, a student, a learning process, or a class. The bounded system, or case is selected because it is one instance drawn from a class or a group (Adelman, Jenkins, and Kemmis, 1983). The importance of the case study as identified by Stake is,

> because of the universality and importance of experiential understanding, and because of their compatibility with such understanding, case studies can be expected to continue to have epistemological advantage over other

> inquiry methods as a basis for naturalistic generalization. (Stake, 1978, p. 7)

Merriam describes the attributes of case studies as: particularistic, descriptive, heuristic, and inductive in her book: *Case Study Research in Education: A Qualitative Approach.* Particularistic, according to Merriam,

> means that case studies focus on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon. The case itself is important for what it reveals about the phenomenon and for what it might represent. (Merriam, 1988, p. 11)

This characteristic requires researchers to concentrate their attention on the way particular groups of people confront specific problems and also to take a holistic view of the situation. The term descriptive, according to Merriam, means that the final product of a case study should be a rich thick description of the phenomenon being studied. The thick description, according to Merriam, is a complete, literal description of the incident or entity under investigation (Merriam, 1988). The style of description of qualitative case studies, as Wilson points out, is usually literary. Case studies use prose and other literary devices to describe, elicit images, and analyze situations (Wilson, 1979). By the term heuristic, Merriam means that case studies can develop the reader's understanding of the phenomenon being investigated (Merriam, 1988). This characteristic echoes Stake's view of case study for he notes that,

> Previously unknown relationships and variables can be expected to emerge from case studies leading to a rethinking of the phenomenon being studied. Insights into how things get to be the way they are can be expected to result from case studies. (Stake, 1981, p. 47)

Inductive is Merriam's way of saying that case studies must rely heavily on inductive reasoning.

In a case study, the researcher attempts to examine an individual or a phenomenon in great depth. He or she tries to discover all the variables that are important to the understanding of the proposed problem. The emphasis of a case study, as pointed out by Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh, is on uncovering of why the individual under study does what he or she does (Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh, 1972). A case study was suitable for my focus of the research problem because this method enabled a deeper and broader understanding of the problems being investigated.

3.4. Data collection and analysis

3.4.1. Observations in the Classroom

> In general, the richest vein of information is struck through direct observation of school and classroom life. (Eisner, 1991, p. 182)
>
> Enter into the world. Observe and wonder. Experience and reflect. To understand a world you must become part of that world while at the same time remain separate, a part of and apart from. (Patton, 1990, p. 199)

Spradley (1980) identifies three major types of observations in social science research. They are: 1) descriptive observation, 2) focused observation, and 3) selective observation. According to Spradley, an observation usually begins with wide descriptive observation. In the beginning of the research process, the researcher places emphasis on focused observation and later on selected observation. Spradley (1980) also notes that the participation of researcher in research studies differs from one researcher to another. There are different levels of involvement in the participation while people do research. In this study, first I went to the participant's school to observe the social setting and the teaching in general in that school. This helped me to acquire the knowledge of the social

setting and become acquainted with the school environment. Then after a few weeks, I focused my attention on the participating teacher's classroom and language teaching pedagogy.

In this study, I had been a passive participant during the class time. I was present in the classroom, but I did not participate or interact with the students or the teacher to any great extent during the class time. During the whole research period, most of my observations were focused on the teacher. I conversed with him before the commencement of the class about his teaching plans. I then observed how he implemented his plans in the class.

While observing the class, I recorded what I saw. In order to avoid being an object of attention, I used a small notebook to record my field notes. In the cultural setting that I studied, Chinese and Canadian English mixed with children's immature Chinese language was the language of communication. Though I am new to this Canadian culture, I seriously studied English while I was at a university in China and I have been immersed in the Canadian culture for over three years. I had no problem understanding and interpreting the standard Chinese and children's English-Chinese. I took a tape recorder to record everything which was said. Whenever a language problem occurred, I would write down the words and phrases which I could not understand and asked the teacher or the students to explain them to me after the class. During the study, I kept a record or field notes, a field work journal and my analysis and interpretation. The field notes that I took were a condensed version of what actually occurred during the field observation. The field work journal contained a record of experiences, ideas, my reactions and feelings during the research. The analysis and interpretation included my insights into the phenomena under study.

3.4.2. Interview

Interview is one of the common means of collecting qualitative data (Merriam, 1985). In this study, in-depth interviewing was chosen as one of the methods for data collection. The purpose of an interview, according to Patton, is to find out what is "in and on someone else's mind". He further explains,

> We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe..... We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world--we have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interview, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective. (Patton, 1980, p. 196)

Dexter also indicates that the interview is one of the most preferred methods of data collection. He suggests that an interview can provide better data and more data to the researcher and it can provide data at less cost than other methods (Dexter, 1970).

The three types of interview as identified by Berg (1989) are the standardized (formal) interview, the unstandardized (informal) interview, and the semistandardized (guided-semistructured) interview. The type of interview that I employed in this study was the semistandardized interview. This type of interview involved the utilization of a number of predetermined questions used as a stimulus for discussion. Berg says that this system provides,

> a systematic and consistent order, but allows the interviewers sufficient freedom to digress; that is, the interviewers are permitted (in fact expected) to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared and standardized questions. (Berg, 1989, p. 17)

The essential questions, according to Berg, are questions which only focus on the central problem of the study (Berg, 1989). The essential questions of this study were:

1. What principles of whole language are used by the teacher?

2. How does the Chinese teacher use the whole language principles in the course of helping children learn Mandarin?

3. What are the reasons for using whole language principles instead of traditional approaches which the teacher was accustomed to using in China?

4. What implications might be drawn from this research for second language education?

By using open-ended questions, I aimed to elicit authentic responses from the participating teacher on issues related to the study. In this research, some probing questions such as "Could you tell me more about that?", "Why do you say that?", etc. were asked. Probing questions, as defined by Berg, are questions that can,

> provide interviewers with a way to draw out more complete stories from subjects. Probes frequently ask subjects to elaborate on what they have already answered in response to a given question. (Berg, 1989, p. 22)

In order to ask the most appropriate probing questions, I considered the following procedures suggested by Bergess,

> First, it is essential to listen carefully in order to participate in the conversation, to pose particular questions on topics that have not been covered or need developing. Secondly, it is important not to interrupt the person or persons who are being interviewed... Thirdly, interviewers need to monitor their own comments, gestures and actions as they may advance or impede the interview. Finally interviewers need to ensure that similar topics are covered in interviews where the data are to be used to make comparisons. (Bergess, 1984, p. 111)

While formulating the interview questions, I adhered to the following guidelines suggested by Denzin.

> Questions should accurately convey meaning to the respondent; they should motivate him to become involved and to communicate clearly his attitudes and opinions; they should be clear enough so that the interviewer car. easily convey meaning to the respondent; they should be precise enough to exactly convey what is expected of the respondent...; any specific question should have as a goal the discerning of a response pattern that clearly fits the broad contents of the investigation...; if questions raise the possibility of the respondent's lying or fabricating (which is always a possibility), care should be taken to include questions that catch him up, or reveal to him and the interviewer that his previous answers have been incorrect. (Denzin, 1970, p. 129)

3.4.3. The data analysis

Powney and Watts suggest that data analysis is not a simple description of the data collected. It is, as they believe, a process by which the researcher can bring interpretation to the data (Powney and Watts, 1987). Bogdan and Biklen indicate that qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively. They suggest,

> As a qualitative researcher planning to develop some kind of theory about what you have been studying, the direction you will travel comes after you have been collecting the data, after you have spent time with your subjects. You are not putting together a puzzle, whose picture you already know. You are constructing a picture which takes shape as you collect and examine the parts. (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992, p. 32)

To Guba and Lincoln, data are the constructions offered by participants. They regard the qualitative data analysis as a continuous synthetic process in which the

constructions emerge from inquirer-source interactions and are reconstructed by the inquirer into meaningful entities (Guba and Lincoln, 1985).

3.5. Trustworthiness of the study

3.5.1. Introduction

One perennial question that faces researchers using any research paradigm is the question of the trustworthiness of the research findings. Can the results of the research be trusted? How can you know that the findings are true?

Guba and Lincoln (1985) summarize the four main concerns of any piece of research on the problem of trustworthiness. They are:

> 1. True value. How can one establish confidence in the "truth" of the findings of a particular inquiry for the subjects (respondents) with which and the context in which the inquiry was carried out?
> 2. Applicability. How can one determine the degree to which the findings of a particular inquiry may have applicability in other contexts or with other subjects (respondents)?
> 3. Consistency. How can one determine whether the findings of an inquiry would be consistently repeated if the inquiry were replicated with the same (or similar) subjects (respondents) in the same (or similar) context?
> 4. Neutrality. How can one establish the degree to which the findings of an inquiry are a function solely of subjects (respondents) and conditions of the inquiry and not of the biases, motivations, interests, perspectives, and so on, of the inquirer?
> (Guba, 1981, p. 79-80)

In the quantitative (scientific) research paradigm, as Guba (1981) points out, researchers use terms such as internal validity, external validity (or generalizability),

reliability and objectivity to address the above four areas of interest respectively. Guba demonstrated the inappropriateness of the trustworthiness measurement in the quantitative research paradigm and asserted that to apply conventional quantitative research paradigm trustworthiness measures to the qualitative research paradigm is inappropriate. Instead of applying the quantitative research paradigm criteria to research in the qualitative research paradigm, Guba proposed alternative trustworthiness criteria to consider for the four areas of interest in the quantitative research paradigm. The criteria that he proposed include, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

3.5.2. Credibility

Credibility is used to compare with internal validity in the quantitative research paradigm to establish the true value. This criterion measures the truthfulness or accuracy of the findings. Some researchers (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982) point out that credibility may be the major strength and prime objective of qualitative research. The term "credibility" implies that the researcher's task is to show that the data are believable because the thoroughness and total integrity of the description enable the reader to get a complete understanding of the study. For the purpose of establishing true value, the researcher in the quantitative research paradigm is interested in testing the credibility of his or her research results with various sources from which data were drawn. Guba indicates that the process of testing credibility is often referred to as doing "member checks". That is to test the data with members of relevant human data source groups (Guba, 1981). In Lincoln and Guba's 1985 writing, they further suggest the following methods can be employed to increase the credibility of the findings and interpretations of the research findings: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, referential adequacy, and member checking. According to Lincoln

and Guba (1985), prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation are all activities which can increase the probability that credible findings will be produced. In this case study, triangulation, which is a process in which various data sources, different investigators, different theories, and different methods are arranged against one another in order to cross-check the data and the interpretation as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), Guba (1981) and Merriam (1988), will be applied. In this study, I interviewed the students and the principal to obtain their insights of how the participating teacher used whole language perspective in his classroom. I believed that the data from these interviews could provide more insights of the participating teacher's pedagogy. In addition to this, I also put an emphasis on prolonged engagement and persistent observation. Prolonged engagement, according to Lincoln and Guba,

> is the investment of sufficient time to achieve certain purposes: learning "the culture", testing for misinformation introduced by distortions either of the self or of the respondents, and building trust. (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 301)

In this study, I spent three months in the classroom and school conversing with the participating teacher and his students to learn the participating teacher's philosophy. I studied the context they were in and developed a trust relationship with the participating teacher. I kept a record after observation and during each interview, to check my own developing perceptions. Like prolonged engagement, persistent observation also requires the researcher to spend enough time in the research. Lincoln and Guba state,

> If the purpose of prolonged engagement is to render the inquirer open to the multiple influences--the mutual shapers and contextual factors--that impinge upon the phenomenon being studied, the purpose of persistent observation is to identify those characteristics and elements in the situation that are most relevant to the problem or issue being pursued and focusing on them in detail. If prolonged engagement provides scope, persistent observation provides depth. (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 302)

In order to describe the participating teacher's classroom and to find out the participating teacher's pedagogical philosophy, I extended my interactions with the participant, by conducting more interviews, eliminating questions that were irrelevant, and attending to relevant aspects that were essential to the problem.

Peer debriefing, according to Lincoln and Guba,

> is a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind. (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 308)

During the data collection process, the data summarization process, and the interpreting process, I invited three fellow graduate students to help to analyze the data. I showed them all the data and asked them to comment on the process and the findings of this research.

3.5.3. Transferability

Transferability is used to compare with external validity in the quantitative research paradigm in order to address the question of, "Could these findings be applied to other situations?". Guba points out the fact that the external validity (or generalizability) of the quantitative research paradigm is taken as time-enduring and can be held in any context. He criticizes this point of view and promotes the notion that it is impossible to develop "truth" statements that will have generalizable applicability. He suggests that inquiry can be affected by the uniqueness of the context and the participants. Therefore, according to him, there is no inquiry from which we can produce truth statements of generalizable applicability. Researchers, Guba believes, should be happy with the descriptive or interpretive statements of a given context under study. Guba also acknowledges the

possibility that some transferability between two contexts could happen if there were certain fundamental similarities. The transferability of the research findings in the qualitative research paradigm relies heavily upon the extent of similarity between the contexts (Guba, 1981). In order to achieve this transferability of research findings (in other words, the possibility of generalization), Guba suggests collecting thick, descriptive data and doing theoretical or purposive sampling while doing the study and also developing thick descriptions after completing the study in order to allow the comparison to other contexts (Guba, 1981). In the present study, theoretical or purposive sampling was not possible, instead I made an effort to generate detailed and rich descriptions of the participant and provided the desired "thick" descriptive data so that the reader might make his or her own determination of the degree of fit with other contexts.

3.5.4. Dependability

Dependability can be compared to reliability in the quantitative research paradigm to deal with the consistency problem (How dependable are the results?). In the quantitative research paradigm, researchers believe that inquiry can be affected by instrumental decay or change. In order to guard against this happening, researchers using this paradigm must replicate. But, qualitative research cannot be exactly replicated.

Researchers using the qualitative research paradigm believe that social contexts are unique and are always changing. Instability of the findings will occur due to the fact that the social world consists only as a set of multiple realities. There is a great possibility that the research instrument will change because in the qualitative research paradigm the research instrument is the human being--the researcher. The knowledge and the insight of the researcher will increase during the process of conducting the research. Another factor that will influence this is that the phenomena being investigated are also not static, but are

changing constantly. The researchers of the qualitative research paradigm are concerned with more than just a simple replication. The researchers must accept that some portion of observed instability is real and unavoidable. In order to gain more dependability of the research findings, Guba suggests the use of overlap methods, stepwise replication, and an audit trail while doing the study and then doing a dependability audit after completing the study (Guba, 1981).

In this study, using the technique of overlap methods and stepwise replication were not possible. I employed the audit trail method and arranged a dependability audit. The function of an audit trail as described by Guba is that it makes

> it possible for an external auditor to examine the processes whereby data were collected and analyzed, and interpretations were made. The audit trail takes the form of documentation (the actual interview notes taken, for example) and a running account of the process (as in the form of the investigator's daily journal). (Guba, 1981, p. 87)

In order to allow for a dependability audit, I described in great detail how these data were collected, how the meaning was derived, and how the decisions were made throughout the research. After the completion of this study, I invited three fellow graduate students to follow the dependability audit in order to examine the information and comment on the process. I arranged for the three graduate students to conduct the audit in the manner which Halpern (Lincoln, 1985) had described. I made them familiar with the audit guide chart that Halpern (1983) developed and made sure that they followed Halpern's procedure and categories.

A full description of Halpern's audit trail procedure and categories can be found in Lincoln (1985) and Halpern (1983). The following is a brief summary of Halpern's categories and procedure:

Audit categories: 1) Raw data: It includes electronically recorded materials, written field notes and other unobtrusive measures as documents. 2) Data reduction and analysis of products: It includes the write-ups of field notes, summaries and hypothesis and hunches. 3) Data reconstruction and synthesis: This includes the categorical structure, interpretation, findings and conclusions and final report. 4) Process notes: This is used to refer to the methodological notes, trustworthiness notes and audit trail notes. 5) Materials relating to intentions and dispositions: This includes the research proposal, personal notes and expectations. 6) Instrument development information: This includes information on the research schedules and observation format.

Audit process includes the following five stages: 1) Preentry: This stage includes events such as initial contact with the auditor, orientation to the study, and discussions of audit alternatives. 2) Determination of auditability: This stage includes activities to help the auditor become familiar with the study, the audit trail and then determine the auditability. 3) Formal agreement: This refers to the stage at which the two sides negotiate the contract. 4) Determination of trustworthiness: The actual assessment of the trustworthiness of the study. 5) Closure.

3.5.5. Confirmability

The term "confirmability" compares with objectivity in a quantitative research paradigm to deal with the neutrality problem. In the quantitative research paradigm, researchers believe that the inquiry can be affected by the inquirer's predictions and bias and must prevent this where possible. In order to guard against this happening, the researcher must be insulated. The researchers using the qualitative research paradigm are more aware of the cultural and ethnic biases that the researcher might bring into the research because their belief is that there are multiple realities in the social world. Because

of this belief, they move their focus from the qualifications of the investigator and his or her method to the confirmability of the data collected. To provide for confirmability, Guba suggests triangulation and the practice of reflexivity (leaving an audit trail) while doing the study and completing a confirmability audit after the study is finished (Guba, 1981). In this study, triangulation was established through collecting data from different perspectives. I collected data from the students and the principal to compare with observations and data collected from interview with the teacher. In addition to this, I practised reflexivity and arranged for a confirmability audit. The term practising reflexivity, according to Ruby, means to

> intentionally reveal to his audience the underlying epistemological assumptions which cause him to formulate a set of questions in a particular way, and finally to present his findings in a particular way. (Ruby, 1980, p. 157)

In this study, I briefly shared my history and my educational philosophy with the readers, and kept a kind of record to track the developing insights of the researcher. After the research, I completed a confirmability audit. The term confirmability audit, according to Guba, is

> to certify that data exist in support of every interpretation and that the interpretations have been made in ways consistent with the available data... This type of audit is concerned primarily with the products of the inquiry... (Guba, 1981, p. 81)

I asked the same three fellow graduate students who conducted the dependability audit to conduct the confirmability audit. Similar to the dependability audit, the confirmability audit was conducted in the manner which Halpern (Lincoln, 1985) had described.

CHAPTER FOUR: DAQUAN GAO, THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

> ...understanding the origins of ... teacher perspectives is largely a product of understanding the impact of biography -- those experiences that have directly influenced an individual's thinking about teaching and schools. (Knowles, 1992, p. 102)

4.1. Introduction

Lincoln (1985) indicates that the finding of qualitative research is the result of close interaction between the researcher and the participant. In the process of qualitative research, the participant provides data, interacts with the researcher, and enhances the understanding of the researcher towards the phenomena under investigation. I believe it is necessary in qualitative research for the researcher to provide a thick description of the participants. Information about the participants will assist the reader to have a better understanding of the research findings. In this section, I will present a brief description of the participating teacher and his historical background in the expectation that this will provide readers with some information about the participating teacher.

4.2. Gao's life experience and the development of his intellectual and social consciousness

Gao was born in a northeast city in China in the year when the Chinese nationalist regime was overthrown and communist China was established. This year is usually called "the Year of Liberation" in Chinese history, as the Chinese people were said to have been liberated from the oppression of the "three big mountains", namely, imperialism, feudalism, and the bureaucratic bourgeoisie. Gao lived in China for thirty-seven years. In his thirty-seven years of experience in China, as Gao recalled, like most people of his generation, politics was a very important part of his life. He believed that it played an important role in the formation of his consciousness and thinking.

In the Fall of 1966, the Cultural Revolution took place in China. At that time, Gao was just about to graduate from junior high school. Like most Chinese, particularly the younger ones, Gao took part in the mass movement with great enthusiasm. Gao wrote in one of his works the following stories about what happened to him during that period of time:

> *June 20, 1966*
>
> I am too excited to sleep tonight, though it is almost midnight now. I should write down my feeling before this historical day is gone.
>
> I was very tired at the time I went to bed tonight. We were supposed to have high school entrance examinations tomorrow. These examinations are so important to me, that if my scores are not high enough for the key high schools, I will definitely lose my chance to get into a university later. That means I would not have an intellectual future for my whole life.
>
> It was eleven o'clock. Lying in bed, I was still thinking about those math formulas. I heard the radio in my parents' room. After the solemn music of "The East is Red", the announcer's voice knocked on my ears: " ... Examination in our schools cannot evaluate the true knowledge of the students. They cannot examine students' ability in problem analyzing and solving. They lead our young people to be book worms divorced from proletarian politics, from the worker and peasant masses and from practice. They also become the instrument of bourgeois

intellectuals to dominate our school and to suppress students' initiatives and creativeness. Our great teacher, great leader, great commander, and great helmsman Chairman Mao instructed that all the examinations in education be banned. This is effective immediately...."

I found myself immediately jumping from the bed shouting "Long live Chairman Mao! Long live chairman Mao!". With tears in my eyes, I heard the radio continue: "No one else in the world could have such great insight and make such courageous decisions. He stands high and sees far, designing the future of our country for hundreds and thousands of years to come".

Now I am thinking about what happened in the last few days in the school. At the very beginning of the Cultural Revolution, Chairman Mao called on us young people to "dare to think, dare to struggle, and dare to throw the emperor out of his throne." He gave us "The Four Great Democracies" which are "speaking out freely, airing views fully, holding great debates and writing big-character posters". He asked us to use critical thinking to challenge almost everything.

I used to think that everything written in books was right and true; every thing teachers said was correct. But in the last few days, I and other Red Guards are challenging them.

According to the newspaper, some bourgeois representatives in education exercised a revisionist educational line against Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. Those people controlled most of our educational system. We were taught the knowledge made by bourgeoisie though we were in socialist schools. Instead of teaching us to become social transformers, they taught us to be the slaves of disciplines, the slaves of books, the slaves of authorities, and the slaves of the existing social system.

I got the answer why I always had trouble with lessons and examinations in school. The school did not teach us the true knowledge we need. Instead of learning the ability to analyze and solve problems, we were taught to become book worms. The theories in the textbook could not be connected with life and practice. This explains why some university graduates majoring in electricity could not even fix a light at home.

I had my own experience as well. Some subjects to me were so hard. It was just because I had no interest in them. What is the use of learning English? All the English speaking countries are our enemies. We will never get a chance to speak to any of them unless we meet in a battlefield. Besides we always talk about grammar. It is so boring. I like science anyhow, particularly electricity. But the things taught in the class are so little and so simple. I know much more than that.

Since I fell in love with fixing radios, I have read much on the subject. I had no teachers to help me at all. But I learned so much. In reading these books, I found my knowledge of mathematics was not enough. Then I found the relevant math books to read. I got to understand math for senior high students when I was only in second year junior high. And I spent only a few days to learn what would have cost me months if it had been taught in school.

The school always tried to tell us that knowledge had to be systematic. Does that make sense? I could remember well that on the first day of my junior high school, we had half an hour of silent reading. I opened the new language arts textbook. The first lesson was about how workers built a dam. I found it was very boring. I flipped over the pages, and found that the last lesson about the Korean War was more interesting. But as soon as I started reading, a harsh voice came from behind: "Stand up!" With my heart trembling, I rose and found it was the school principal who was inspecting. "Look at him! What a good student he is" he said to the class satirically. "Today is your first day in this school, but you have come to the last lesson. How did you learn the rest of the book in a few minutes." Just for this little "fault", I was ordered to stand in front of the class for fifteen minutes.

Why is it so important that we have to learn all the other lessons before I can look at the last one? It is only now that I can understand that the principal as well as most of the teachers are the executives of the bourgeois educational line. They certainly did not want us to be independent thinkers but the slaves of the system.

Chairman Mao is the wisest and most insightful leader of our country. When Chairman Mao's niece told him about a "bad" student in her class, who failed the examinations and never followed the teachers,

Chairman Mao said insightfully that he might be the best student in the class. He might be full of bright ideas and independent thinking which were not appreciated by the existing system. It was not the student's fault but the fault of the system. Now Chairman Mao gave us the right to change our education. There is really a lot in school that we must change.

December 19, 1966

The great Proletariat Cultural Revolution has taken place for half a year now. I never anticipated that in my life time, I could experience such a great political event, and be involved in such a great social transformation. I had dreamed of being born in the time of revolutionary war. Now I am in a period that has equally far-reaching significance in human history.

In the last few months, we stopped the regular classes in school. We started heated debates on what a genuine proletarian education should be. It was the first time the principals, teachers and other authorities carefully listened to us. It was the first time we students made changes in schools.

When I first heard of the words "socialism vs. capitalism" and "class struggle" in the political lessons before the cultural revolution, I thought I had learnt a lot. I even believed that I had developed a "class consciousness". Now I know how shallow and naive I was then. It was only through this true class struggle that I know what class struggle is.

When Chairman Mao said that "class struggles go on every day, every minute and everywhere in our society", I was wondering how come I could not see them. I looked at my surroundings, the school, the community, wherever I went. They seemed to be very peaceful and harmonious. I was told that some class enemies who survived, formed secret organizations and plotted to overthrow the people's government. That sounded very scary. And I never heard of any of my acquaintances being involved or even witnessing anything like that. It was also said that some enemies lured children by offering candies and then told them stories or taught them verses to spread feudalist or bourgeois ideology. Once we found an old man was selling some books about gods and ghosts. To us it was the superstition our party called on people to wipe out in the country.

We reported it to the teacher, but it seemed that she did not pay enough attention to it. That was about the most serious class struggle I ever noticed in the society.

Now, since the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, I gradually understand what class struggle means in the socialist setting. The counter-revolutionaries in China are not like what I thought as the scattered and isolated individuals or groups who made some fainted cries and attempts. Class struggle is everywhere in our life. And it is conducted in a large scale in almost every field, industry, agriculture, scientific research, medical care, education, etc. It is particularly serious in the cultural areas such as literature, mass media, education, social sciences. Most of these class enemies have power. They are party members, government officials, or academic authorities. The headquarters of bourgeoisie is not outside the Party, but inside. And their chief leader is nobody but the vice Chairman of the Party, Chairman of the national government, Liu Shaoqi, the number two leader in our country.

It is hard to believe, but is the fact. For years, those "capitalist roaders" within the Party and the government are criticizing the party and Chairman Mao's correct leadership. They controlled mass media and most of the local governments. Some intellectuals used essays, novels and plays to throw innuendoes, viciously attacking Chairman Mao's party line. Liu Shaoqi, when he became the Chairman of the government, followed Helshaof's Soviet Union revisionist model of socialism. Instead of relying on the broad masses of working people, he depended on a few so-called authorities in science and technology. He advocated a diplomatic policy of surrendering to imperialism. He did not support the armed struggle of the exploited people in the world. He even said exploitation is good, and necessary. There is even more startling facts that he betrayed the Party at the very beginning of revolution. For decades, he was the representative of international imperialism and the defeated domestic bourgeoisie. (For the sake of preserving anonymity, information on the source of the passage is not provided)

It was during the period of the Cultural Revolution in China, Gao started to acquire a critical thinking consciousness. Based upon the single absolute "truth", that was

Chairman Mao's thought and words, together with thousands of other Chinese Red Guards, Gao began to critically examine everything in the society and started to challenge what he used to take for granted. Gao recalled that his critical thinking at this period of time was based mainly upon Mao's thoughts. He believed this kind of critical thinking was not founded on much information and diversity in thinking, and he later regarded it as a type of superstition. In 1968, when the great Cultural Revolution was at its climax, Chairman Mao called on the educated young people to go to the countryside and the mountain areas. Mao said "the countryside is a vast world where the educated young people can use their talent to accomplish much". Mao also pointed out that "the educated young people should go to the countryside to receive re-education from the poor and lower-middle class peasants". In response to his call, thousands and thousands of Red Guards and other high school students went to the countryside to settle down in different parts of the country. Like many other young people in China, Gao went to the countryside and started the long and hard "re-education". This new life experience gave Gao the chance to see the world and life more deeply. He came to understand the value of his own thought and being an individual of his own, he started to struggle for self-assertion and self-accomplishment. In the process of becoming a stronger individual, he gradually developed greater critical thinking skills. This critical thinking is based on independent judgment and strong self-consciousness. The following accounts reflected his change of thinking and his way of seeing the world:

> ...hard work was the easier part of life this time. The most unbearable thing now was being controlled. When we came, we thought we were Red Guards coming to spread revolution and transform the backward countryside. But after we got here, we found we became the objects of revolution. No one called us Red Guards any more. We became the petty bourgeoisie who needed to be re-educated. Once we were transferred to a very remote camp. The army officer addressed us: "To get rid of your filthy thoughts of bourgeois liberalization, you need to be tempered by

hard life. You should taste the same way of life we had during the war. It is ten kilometers from here. You need to walk there yourselves. There is no transportation for your luggage. Carry them as we did in the war. There will be no heating there either. If you have revolutionary spirit inside, you will not be frozen." We go there, and found a big empty house. The door of the house could not be shut. Twenty of us young guys huddled together to keep ourselves warm. The next morning I found I could not get up because my hair was frozen to the wall.

We tried to argue. Some resisted the orders. They were detained for violating the disciplines. Disciplines, lots of disciplines. We were not allowed to date. We were not even allowed to go back home to see our parents after several months of work. Once we decided to escape. But we were far from the railway station. Soon they caught us and brought us back. In a public meeting held to criticize us, we were forced to make self-criticism in front of the large audience.

Since then, I found my revolutionary zeal had all gone. Like a herd of sheep, we were being whipped, driven and tamed. I could hardly feel like a revolutionary pioneer as I did when I was a Red Guard. Those days, one thing came to my mind very often. That is "ME". It had been a negative word since I was born. I try to distance from it. I try to forget it completely. But now, I find I was getting closer and closer to it. I no longer hated it. I am working for it.

I think and think and think about "ME", my past, my life in the farm now and my possible future. (For the sake of preserving anonymity, information on the source of the passage is not provided)

In 1972 after several years of the Cultural Revolution, Chairman Mao instructed that the universities be restored. Some students began to have a chance to study in the universities. At that time, political achievements were more important than the academic grades in enrolling university students. In 1973, very luckily, Gao was enrolled into a teachers college in northeast China to specialize in English language and literature. He now commented that taking English as his career opened up a new world to him. Though he did not choose to take English himself at that time, he did not regret that. During that

period of time, Gao found that he had gone through a process of self enrichment in his intellectual life. While studying at the teachers' college, he learned a lot from his professors and the foreign language books. He said,

> Once we had a class discussion on "Being Red and Specialized". This was the slogan in China since 1960s. "Red" meant being politically sound, in other words following the Party closely. During the Cultural Revolution. it meant particularly being actively involved in the class struggles. Being specialized meant becoming expert in one's profession. This slogan meant that one should not be simply specialized in his or her own profession, but also be "red" in politics. At that time when I was in the college, it was argued that as long as you were "red", you would automatically become specialized, as a correct line of ideology was the guarantee of one's professional improvement. At that time, nobody even dared to say that being "specialized" was equally important. But in the class discussion that day, our professor did.
>
> He argued that if being "specialized" was not important, why did people go to a surgeon for an operation instead of turning to a Party secretary! The next morning, a big poster was put on the hallway, criticizing him for encouraging students to become "White and Specialized" instead of being "Red." Everybody knew what "White" meant. It was the symbol of bourgeoisie, capitalism, and the overthrown Chinese Nationalist regime. We often used the term "White Terror" to mean the "cruel suppression" against the revolution in the old Nationalist regime. We all understood what serious consequence this poster would bring to the professor.
>
> At the time, some of our students, were very sympathetic to him. We tried every way to help him past that crisis. He and I established very good relationship after that. We two often talked for the whole night, and the topic of conversation was politics. I was very impressed by his wide range of knowledge and his sharpness in thinking.
>
> Perhaps, this was what I benefited most in the three years of my college life. I met those people, the professors and some students, who had more sophisticated thinking, and who not only challenged the system but also studied the system carefully. I also got a lot of books to read.

> The English Department had something which was forbidden outside, such as some foreign journals and audio-visual materials. Those things all challenged my old thinking, and brought fresh knowledge to me. We even got a chance to speak English with foreigners. (For the sake of preserving anonymity, information on the source of the passage is not provided)

After completing his college degree, he became a school teacher of English, and later transferred to a teachers university to train young students to become English language teachers. In the summer of 1987, another major life change happened to Gao. He was admitted by a Canadian University to do his graduate degrees in education. Coming to Canada and experiencing the Canadian culture gave Gao new perspectives and transformed him into a new person. He built up a new value system, a new belief, and a new way of thinking which was alien to a lot of people, sometimes even to himself. He wrote:

> My old friends, who knew me as a strong opponent of Mao's tyranny and the terror of the Cultural Revolution, are surprised to hear that I talk about Mao's insight in the Cultural Revolution. My fellow Chinese feel terrified to know my new view of Chinese national unity. I am claiming the independence of Taiwan, Tibet and Xinjiang province might not be a bad thing. My wife can hardly accept my idea that there is nothing "right" or "wrong" in this world; "right" can be wrong and "wrong" can be right. My philosophy of education sounds too radical, not only to my former Chinese colleagues, but even to many Canadian teachers and educators. (For the sake of preserving anonymity, information on the source of the passage is not provided)

4.3. Traditional Chinese educational philosophy, English language education in China, and Gao's teaching experience

A brief elucidation of the traditional Chinese educational philosophy and English language teaching and learning in China, I think, is necessary if we want to discuss Daquan Gao's second language pedagogy and further draw some implications for teaching a second language in China.

4.3.1. The traditional Chinese educational philosophy

The traditional Chinese educational theory mainly derives from Confucian conceptions of a good life and a good society. Confucius's philosophy is a very important part of the Chinese cultural heritage. It has unique insights on education, nature and government. Confucius, who was born 500 years before Christ, was an ancient Chinese educator. He lived at a time when China suffered a series of bloody wars among its various states and warring families within states fighting for land and territory. The emperors, scholars, and philosophers from around China attempted to find solutions to the chaos and to unite China. Confucius was one of those involved in this effort.

Confucius was born into an intellectual family where he was trained in music, moral character and history. His main concern centered around people's loss of faith in the rulers (the emperors). Confucius believed that people must accept their place in the world for peace and harmony and he wanted to have the powers of the rulers (the emperors) and the hierarchical social orders restored. Based upon these beliefs, he started his teaching and writing. His writings and speeches are regarded as the cornerstone of the Confucian philosophy. The pith of Confucian thought is on people's moral integrity. Confucius' moral precepts include: (1) "*Ren*", benevolence love, tolerance or human-heartedness. (2) "*Yi*", justice or righteousness. (3) "*Li*", courtesy or a combination of etiquette and propriety. (4) "*Zhi*", knowledge or wisdom. (5) "*Xin*", truthfulness or sincerity. The highest virtue in Confucianism is "*Ren*", as it is called by Confucius

himself (Wright, 1965; and Ting, 1987). Confucius once defined the concept of "*Ren*" as "*Kejifuli*". "*Kejifuli*", according to Confucius, means to restrain one's ego and to observe "the supreme order of rituals". He indicated that if we all acquire the essence of "*Ren*", that is, if people accept and perform the appropriate rituals as dictated by "the supreme order of rituals", harmonious social order can be attained, the best state or government can be established, vicious and evil people (which Confucius refers to as women and villains) can be kept in place, and permanent peace, harmony and order can be consummated in the society. Confucius' definition of "the supreme order of rituals", as one of his teachings has expressed succinctly, is to "Let the emperor be an emperor, the slave be a slave; let the father be a father, the son be a son" (Ting, 1987, p. 50). Underlying this preaching is the idea that everyone has a place in the society which is pre-determined and cannot be altered at one's own will. One should know his or her role, and should carry out his or her role as assigned. Through rigorous training and discipline, Confucius and his followers believed that everyone can acquire the virtue of "*Ren*".

The traditional Chinese education was greatly influenced by the Confucian philosophy. Education, as believed by many traditional Chinese educators, should target the fostering of "*Ren*" in students in the expectation that this will lead to an eternal peace and order in the society. Teaching and learning in traditional Chinese education is organized around the study of *The Four Books* and *Five Works*, the Confucian classics. Those writings, which were written about Confucius and compiled by Confucius' students, were regarded as books about the highest virtue and value, and the indisputable laws of the universe. To learn those books, students were required to memorize the writings, recite the lines, and interpret the meaning. Similar to the Western philosopher Plato, Chinese Confucian educators promote the idea that the philosophical and spiritual pursuit of scholarship is the noblest form of human activities. Mencius, another Confucian scholar, even made it clear that those laboring with brains can govern others

and those laboring with their brawn can only be governed by others. Students in the traditional Chinese education were discouraged from working on physical, material and practical aspects of human life in the process of education. Professional knowledge and practical skills were ignored and neglected in the formal traditional Chinese education.

The Confucian influence on Chinese education is still present. In the field of foreign language education, as observed by Ting (1987), its influences are centered on three distinct features, namely, teacher-centeredness, textbook-centeredness and grammar-centeredness. By teacher-centeredness, Ting (1987) wants to point out the fact that the language teacher is commonly regarded as the only super power in the classroom. The teacher's lesson cannot be questioned, interrupted and challenged. The learning activities in the classroom are all pre-arranged by the teacher. The teacher's words and ideas are very important. The students' responsibility is to write down the teacher's words and ideas and learn them by heart after the class. The underlying notion of this kind of teaching practice is that the teacher knows everything and never makes mistakes. This notion not only takes away students' participating (communicating) opportunities in the class, but also causes great anxiety and stress for the language teacher. In order to avoid making mistakes, teachers usually prepare themselves very well before entering the classroom. They will write down the target of instruction in advance, pre-arrange every activity in the classroom, and carefully control the language communication in the classroom which is within their capacity. This usually results in the teacher using only what is in the textbooks and what is approved by schools. Students are not supposed to ask any questions outside the realm of the target content. Raising too many questions usually will be regarded by the teacher and other students as impolite, disturbing the teacher's plan, and showing disrespect for the teacher.

This respect for authority and politeness, as believed by Ting (1987), leads to the second type of centeredness in language education, textbook-centeredness. In the process of spreading and teaching the Confucian doctrine, the Confucian classics were once deemed as the highest authority. This unquestioned respect for textbooks has lasted in the Chinese education even to the present day. Having studied and taught in China, I find that many Chinese students and teachers believe that books are the concrete embodiment and presentation of knowledge, wisdom and truth. Knowledge is something that hides in the books. If you wish to acquire the knowledge you have to learn the books by heart. People tend to consider that anything that appears in the text or books is correct and true without even a very slight critical questioning. In the actual foreign language teaching and learning, students are asked to memorize the grammatical rules and lexical items in the textbook. What is left out in this approach is the application of the target language in dealing with our real daily life problems. Language is regarded as an academic subject, learning language is regarded as an exercise of mental capacity.

The third aspect of centeredness is the grammar-centeredness which, as suggested by Ting (1987), also stems from the respect for authority. Confucius believed that all things in this universe are governed by sacred law and order. Language, of course, is no exception. Language is governed by grammatical rules. Every phrase, clause, and sentence segment in language must conform to grammatical rules. Every sentence should be able to be logically explained and justified by grammar. Any language use which is not in conformation with grammatical rules is called "ungrammatical" and seen as a grave mistake. A foreign language text is usually not read for the meaning that resides in the text, but for the purpose of extending the learners' lexicon and the mastery of the law of language, namely grammar.

The above three mentioned centerednesses, as suggested by Yu (1984), Ting (1987) and Dirksen (1990), have had a profound influence on foreign language teaching in China. They believe that students who come out of such teaching and learning systems usually possess a good mastery of grammatical knowledge, but lack practical daily language application skills. Students usually will have problems in handling the authentic use of English language in a real communication context, such as to write a letter or to converse on serious topics. Worst of all, as pointed out by Yu (1984), Ting (1987) and Dirksen (1990), many of the students coming out of such education are used to following the established rules and authorities blindly and are unable to initiate any independent, creative, and critical thinking.

4.3.2. English language teaching and learning in China

As Ashworth notes,

> Educational policies are affected by economic and social policies, as these regulate the amount of money and resources that will be available to institutions as well as establishing the atmosphere that surrounds and permeates them. (Ashworth, 1985, p. 94)

What Ashworth described is exactly the case with education in the People's Republic of China. From 1966 to 1976, China was experiencing the Cultural Revolution. This Cultural Revolution seriously damaged the whole educational system and imposed great losses on the academic excellence in China (Xie, 1992; Muehl and Muehl, 1993; Ross, 1993; Wu, 1993). The direct consequence of this big political event was a series of great changes in the educational policies of all levels of educational institutions in China. The elite education policy was abandoned. Examinations in all academic fields were

canceled. The requirement for college entrance was not excellent performance on the required subjects, and learning was no longer regarded as the priority in the school system. Red, political soundness, was emphasized through one's whole schooling life. The political unrest and educational changes, Xie (1992) points out, had greatly interrupted the English language teaching in China. She described the general English language teaching situation in China during that period of time. She wrote,

> English teachers were not only criticized as bourgeois intellectuals, but also accused of being worshippers of foreign capitalist, running dogs of imperialism or even American spies. English textbooks were criticized as "poisonous weeds". (Xie, 1992, p. 19)

In the early seventies of this century, with the consolidation of China's legitimate position in the United Nations and the mild improvement of the Sino-American relationship, English language teaching and learning was again put into the agenda. But at that time, English language teaching was mainly restricted in the universities to the politically sound worker-peasant-soldier students. The Chinese Communist Party recognized the power of language and emphasized that, "foreign languages should be useful tools for tasks such as publicizing Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong's thought, and supporting the worldwide struggles against imperialists, revisionists, and reactionaries" (Xie, 1992, p. 19). Thus the English textbooks published at that time in China were full of political content and revolutionary slogans. For instance, one textbook entitled *English*, published by the Beijing Foreign Language Institute, is full of slogans such as "Long live Chairman Mao!", "Study hard and make progress everyday" (Chairman Mao Zedong's quotation), "People of the World Unite to Overthrow the Imperialism", etc., and English texts in it are mostly translations of Chairman Mao Zedong's articles, political speeches, and statements, excerpts from the *People's Daily* (The official newspaper of the Communist Party in China) and *The Red Flag* (The official

journal of the Communist Party in China). The texts served as illustrations of the actual use of grammatical structures. In the English classes, students were taught to sing, "*The East is Red*", "*I Love Beijing Tiananmen Square*" and "*Internationale*" in the English language. Original excerpts from the newspapers and magazines published in North America and Britain, and original short stories and poems from the British and American literature, were not allowed to be used as reading materials inside or outside of the classrooms. The following are two typical texts in English language textbooks published in China at that time:

Learn From Chin Hsun-hua

> Comrade Chin Hsun-hua was a Red Guard. He was from a worker's family. In May 1969, he answered Chairman Mao's call and went to settle down in Heilungkiang. Comrade Chin Hsun-hua studied Chairman Mao's works conscientiously. He earnestly received re-education from the poor and lower-middle peasants. He tempered himself in the three great revolutionary movements. In his diary, he wrote, "I will work with all my energy as long as I live, and dedicate my whole life to Chairman Mao!" He did what he said.
>
> On August 15, 1969, Comrade Chin Hsun-hua heroically laid down his life for the people. Though Comrade Chin Hsun-hua is dead, he lives forever in our hearts. (This text is from an English textbook published in Shanghai and deals with the simple past tense.)
> (From Price, 1979b, p. 322)

The second is from a textbook published in Beijing using the same content to deal with the past continuous and past future tenses.

Learn From Chin Hsun-hua

> It was August 15, 1969. The Hsunho River rose rapidly after a heavy rain. Soon there was a big flood. The telegraph poles on the river bank near the Shuanho Brigade would drift away at any time.

"We must save the poles," said Chin Hsun-hua. "Let us go!" Together with his comrades, Chin rushed to the riverside. The water was running swiftly and two of the poles were already drifting away. At once Chin jumped into the river.

"Come back!", someone called out. "The current is too swift. It's dangerous!" But Chin shouted back, "WHEN WE DIE FOR THE PEOPLE IT IS A WORTHY DEATH." (A quotation from Chairman Mao)

Chin Hsun-hua struggled bravely against the strong waves. One wave after another rushed upon him. Yet he did not turn back. To him, the poles were not just poles. They would carry wires, and over the wires would come Chairman Mao's voice. Now the current was carrying him farther and farther away. He was losing strength, but he struggled on. Three times he pushed his head up and made for the pole near him. It was only one metre away when another big wave rushed over him. Chin Hsun-hua thus heroically gave his life for the people.

Chin Hsun-hua was born in a worker's family. He finished middle school in Shanghai in 1968. In May 1969, he answered Chairman Mao's call and went to settle down in Heilungkiang. There he studied hard Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, and earnestly received re-education from the poor and lower-middle peasants. He tempered himself in the storms of class struggle. In his diary he wrote, "I will work with all my strength as long as I live, and give my whole life to Chairman Mao!" He did what he said. Chin Hsun-hua is dead, but he will live forever in our hearts. His revolutionary spirit will always inspire us. (From Price, 1979b, p. 322)

English language teaching at that time, as Fu points out, "only emphasizes grammar and translation at the expense of language practice" (Fu, 1983, p. 1). The common methodology that most teachers employed to teach English at that time was the Grammar-translation and the Audiolingual approaches. Cowan, Light, Mathews, and Tucker (1979) had commented on the English language teaching practice of that time in China. They state,

> One element which was consistently missing was any opportunity for students to practice communicative use of English. Students were rarely given the opportunity to use language to state their own opinions, express their own feelings, or communicate new information to their classmates. There was a heavy reliance on rote memorization and the reproduction of carefully prepared lessons. (Cowan, Light, Mathews, and Tucker, 1979, p. 474)

After the death of Chairman Mao Zedong and the downfall of Mao's wife Jiang Qing and three other government leaders (Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan and Wang Hongwen) who were designated as "the Gang of Four", China entered a new and more promising era. The "four modernizations" (namely the modernization of agriculture, industry, national defense and science and technology) were emphasized and clearly stated by the Chinese government as the national development goals. In 1977, Deng Xiaoping, the senior Chinese leader, stressed in his discourse on the subject of "respect knowledge" and "respect trained personnel" that, "The key to achieving modernization is the development of science and technology. And unless we pay attention to education, it will be impossible to develop science and technology... We must recognize our backwardness, because only such recognition offers hope. Now it appears that China is fully 29 years behind the developed countries in science, technology and education" (Deng, 1984, p. 53). Shortly after these national goals and Deng's speech were publicized, there were urgent calls from the mass media for the selection and "nourishment of talent" in order to rapidly modernize socialist China (Price, 1979a, p. 287). In 1977, a new educational policy was issued, which clearly states that university entrance in China would be based primarily on examination results in the future. As *Peking Review* put it: "entrance examinations will be restored and admittance based on their results" (*Higher Education: New College Enrollment System*, p. 17). The university entrance examination is a national unified examination. It is held in two parts: humanities and science.

Humanities' candidates are examined in politics, Chinese language and literature, mathematics, history, geography, and foreign language. Science candidates are examined in politics, Chinese language and literature, mathematics, physics, chemistry and foreign language. The details of the examination process, outlines of the required knowledge, selection criteria and the methods of application were given considerable prominence in the national press. This provided the young people a chance for fair competition for a better future (Price, 1979a; Ford, 1988; Hu, 1990). In 1978, Deng Xiaoping addressed the following in a national conference on science and technology:

> ... Backwardness must be recognized before it can be changed. One must learn from those who are most advanced before one can catch up with and surpass them. Of course, in order to raise China's scientific and technological level we must rely on our own efforts, develop our own creativity and persist in the policy of independence and self-reliance. But independence does not mean shutting the door on the world, nor does self-reliance mean blind opposition to everything foreign. Science and technology are part of the wealth created in common by all mankind. Every people or country should learn from the advanced science and technology of others. It is not just today, when we are scientifically and technologically backward, that we need to learn from others. Even after we catch up with the most advanced countries, we shall still have to learn from them in areas where they are particularly strong. (Deng, 1984, p. 106-107)

In order to catch up with the development of other western countries and to learn science and technology from the outside world, the Chinese government adopted a new foreign policy -- the open door policy. This new policy encouraged more and more close contact with other developed countries in the world to promote their scientific, cultural and educational exchange with China. In 1978, the Chinese government set up a series of policies to send Chinese students to study abroad and to also accept foreign students and scholars to study and to teach in China (Huang, 1987). As Huang pointed out,

> It was Comrade Deng Xiaoping's initiative to implement on a large scale the policy of sending many students and visiting scholars abroad from 1978 onwards as part of the open-door policy and the drive for four modernizations.
> (Huang, 1987, p. 228)

With the improvement of the relationship with other countries, the Chinese government had sent thousands and thousands of students to other countries and accepted many students and scholars from the other countries. Statistics show, in 1978 alone, that the Chinese government accepted 1207 international students and sent 3348 Chinese students and scholars to other countries (Huang, 1987).

In October of 1983, Deng Xiaoping said that education should be oriented to modernization, to the world and to the future. The "Three Orientations", according to Huang, implies that,

> (1) a recognition of the importance of the furtherance of lively international exchanges in the field of education, science and culture; (2) the view that educational institutions should nurture globally-minded citizens and help promote international understanding; (3) a call for Chinese scholars and students to learn from foreign countries what is advanced, valuable and relevant for China's modernization efforts; and (4) a commitment for China to make a distinctive contribution to the family of nations in the advancement of education, science and culture and in furthering the cause of peace.
> (Huang, 1987, p. 228)

According to Huang (1987), the new foreign policy of the Chinese government attached great importance to the contacts among people from different nations to promote mutual understanding and friendships. The Chinese government encouraged different organizations and people to have contacts with those in foreign nations and expected

fruitful and ever-expanding international exchanges between China and other foreign countries in the years to come.

Along with the open-door policy, economic reform, and educational reforms, learning English language fever swept the whole country. Cheng (1988) estimated that in 1988 fifty million people in China were engaged in English language learning. In the Chinese universities, colleges and middle schools today, English language is a compulsory course. From 1977 onward, the central national education committee of China developed a new unified English language textbook for the middle school students in China. Besides, the grammatical structures and pattern drills, some texts with North American content were added to the textbooks. Stories such as "*The Match Girl*", "*The Emperor's New Clothes*" and some politically neutral short poems and prose were added to the textbooks as well. At the end of the middle school, the students are required to take an English language test before they enter the universities and colleges, as English is a required, tested subject in the national unified college entrance examination. At the universities or colleges, no matter what the students' majors are, English is very important to them. If they fail an English language course, they are required to take it again. If they fail for the second time, they may lose their degrees unless they pass a subsequent similar test on the English language. After students graduate from a university or college, English language is required for their future promotion in various academic institutions and in many other working units. English language has become a major priority in the Chinese education system. Just as Cowan, Light, Mathews, and Tucker observed, "Foreign language teaching, and English language teaching in particular, occupies a prominent role in Chinese education" (Cowan, Light, Mathews, and Tucker, 1979, p. 476).

With the popularity of radios and televisions in China, informal English language learning opportunities for the Chinese people increased greatly. English language teaching

programs on radio were very popular and were broadcast in almost every province all across mainland China. In Heilongjiang province alone, two different levels of English language teaching programs were broadcast at the same time between 1978 and 1984. English language teaching programs such as BBC's *Follow Me*, *Bid For Power*, *Sadrana Project*, *English on Sunday* etc., are on the national television and provincial television programs very regularly.

According to Xie (1992), since 1979, the national conference on English language teaching methodology has been held every year. There is a lively debate on the application of communicative approach in English language teaching among the Chinese teachers in China (Li, 1984; Wang, 1986; White, 1988; Burnaby and Sun, 1989; Anderson, 1993; Campell and Yong, 1993; Penner, 1995). Research journals on English language teaching and learning were established to circulate novel ideas on methodology among English language teachers in universities and in middle schools. English language newspapers and magazines published in China began to appear. Newspapers such as *China Daily*, and magazines such as *Beijing Review*, *English Language Learning* and *The World of English* are very popular. New English textbooks for Chinese learners are published both within and outside China. A large number of original English language novels and other useful books from the U. S., Britain and Canada have been imported to China. Many universities have hired native English speakers to work in the universities, and sent qualified Chinese English language teachers to go abroad for further study on EFL methodology.

In summary, as long as the present policies on economic and political reforms, and the open door policies to the rest of the world continue, English language teaching and learning will, beyond any doubt, maintain an important role in the Chinese education system. Moffett even predicts that "the People's Republic of China should become

recognized as one of the leaders in foreign language teaching methodology before the turn of the century" (Moffett, 1983, p. 150).

4.3.3. Gao's personality traits, teaching experience and evolving pedagogical perspectives

4.3.3.1. Gao's personality traits

Daquan Gao and I have been friends for a long time. About ten years ago, when I was studying as an undergraduate in a teachers' university in China, Gao was working as an English language teacher in that university. I attended one of his English language courses and we got to know each other and became good friends.

Gao is a tall, slender, attractive man in his early forties with dark eyes and short black hair whose clothes are always pressed and clean. He is a very vibrant, friendly, warm, talkative, sensitive and dynamic person who is always ready to strike up a conversation with a student or a fellow colleague. He listens attentively to others and questions them about their interests. One of his major personality traits is his high degree of tolerance and understanding: everyone is essentially good, and worthy of his trust. Although he rarely criticizes others, he is always open-minded and willing to accept new ideas and suggestions from others.

During the process of this research, I learned more about Gao's personality. According to his students, Gao is kind, intelligent, friendly, and encouraging. Student Tom says that Gao does not get angry and frustrated easily and has the patience to give students time and chances to complete their works. Student Mary says that Gao is kind because he helped her once to solve her personal problems. Student Jeff says that their

teacher is a friend to them, because he does not abuse the control that his job allows him to have over the students, instead, he treats them as equals. Student Alice says that they learn a lot from Gao, not only in terms of being a lifelong learner, a scholar, but also in terms of being an all-around person. While in Gao's classroom, I can see that the students are influenced a great deal by Gao. From my talks with Gao and my observations in his classroom, I have come to believe that a good teacher not only helps his or her students to construct knowledge, but also assists them to construct a personality.

4.3.3.2. Gao's teaching experience and evolving pedagogical perspectives

In about 1987, Daquan Gao left China and came to a Canadian university for graduate study. Within about five years time in the Canadian university, he completed his M.Ed. and Ph.D. in the area of language education.

Studying in a western country gave Gao new perspectives on teaching and learning. While studying, Gao was also asked to teach some courses in second language teaching. By teaching those courses, he learned a lot and started to pay more attention to the underpinning beliefs of different teaching practice.

Several years of cultural experiences and two graduate degree studies in Canada gave Gao a unique opportunity in his learning and personal growth. During this period of time, he said, he had developed a new paradigm of thinking. In this new paradigm, he no longer held that there were objective laws and absolute truth in the world. He believed that everything can be seen from different perspectives and people with different views and ways of life should be understood, accepted, and respected. A life long commitment

was taken by him, to use his own effort and his own unique way, to try to make this world and life better for everyone.

During our discussions, I found Gao's views towards school and schooling in Canada involved an evolving perspective. When he first arrived in Canada, he saw schools in Canada as,

> ... much better places for democracy. When my son finished his first Canadian school day, he told me that he would never go back to Chinese schools. It was not because the rooms and the desks and chairs are better, but because he had so much freedom, and the teacher was so nice to him.
>
> In China, the classroom was always teacher centered. The students were supposed to sit straight with their hands on their back and eyes staring on the teacher all the time. My son did not fit into that educational environment well and was often scolded by the teachers. As a result, he suffered from very low self-esteem, and had a very bad self-image. To move from a Chinese school to a Canadian one, he felt he was in a fantastic wonderland, a garden of heaven. He felt his value and strength because his talent in arts and his knowledge in history were highly appreciated. To him, he was liberated. (For the sake of preserving anonymity, information on the source of the passage is not provided)

After studying in the University for a few years, he quickly discovered that,

> ... this heaven of democracy is severely criticized by many Western educational theorists. The schools are criticized as enslaving students for social reproduction. The relationship between teachers and students is called oppression. And they call for emancipatory education. They want to liberate the schools where my young friend already felt liberated.
>
> It was very hard for me to understand their stand at the beginning. But through careful study and reflection, I found I am totally in agreement with the liberation educators. Though the schools are much better than those Chinese schools, seeing from more progress point of view, it is still the same in nature of the traditional schools, where teachers control the knowledge and curriculum, and the students were only the recipients of

> knowledge. (For the sake of preserving anonymity, information on the source of the passage is not provided)

After Gao started teaching in his school, he noticed that many teachers in his school were still using the traditional second language learning methods to teach. He was disturbed to see children at the age of six, seven or eight repeatedly reading and writing the same Chinese word again and again. He felt that they were so far from initializing students for independent inquiry of knowledge, to become the responsible masters of their own fate. At that time, he came to see that school did function as a tool to enforce a power relationship between students and teachers and other authorities. In the schools, students are prepared to be the slaves of the existing social system generation after generation. He proposed many times to his superiors about the possibility to change, to replace the complex Chinese characters learning with the simplified ones. Simplified Chinese characters are easy to recognize, to write and to learn. He believed the simplified characters would ease children's intense effort to learn and provide career opportunities for them in the Eastern Asian countries when they grow up. Most importantly, he believes, that the changing of the written code from complex ones to simplified ones will increase students' confidence in learning and therefore empower them. Not long ago, Gao attended a Chinese language teaching conference held in Edmonton, and participated in the panel discussion on how to fit the Chinese language teaching in Canada into the whole Canadian education system. Gao criticized some Chinese parents' emphasis on the competitiveness and the notion of education as a privilege and pointed out that education was a right and should focus on the collaboration and cooperation. He promoted the idea that language learning should focus on the learners, on meaning, and communicative needs of the learners. Within the limit of his effort, Gao tried many ways to influence his co-teachers' teaching and bring about changes in the present bilingual program to make learning an easier and more happy experience for the young children.

4.4. Summary

After I arrived in Alberta, the thing that impressed me most is not the breathtaking grandeur and beauty of the Rocky mountains, the flourishing capitalism in West Edmonton Mall, the lavish and luxurious life-style of some rich Albertans, but some of the Edmonton Chinese and English bilingual school students' fluent Mandarin Chinese. It is in one of these Canadian bilingual schools that I found my old friend and former English language teacher Daquan Gao. I visited his classroom and observed his class. I found he was not the Daquan Gao that I knew before. Daquan Gao has changed to a different person. His ideas are new and stimulating. His teaching practice is very different from what I had been familiar with. During my visit to his class, we exchanged ideas on teaching and learning and I distinctly remember being impressed by the way Gao acted with his students and by the way his young students behaved towards him. I want to explore what he thought; where he came from; what he believed; how he acquired these beliefs; what knowledge he possessed about himself, about children and about teaching and learning. This has led me to want to know more about his teaching practice and his underlying philosophies.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCHER AS RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

> It's not true that dogs see only in black and white. Dogs see what they want to see. You are your own dog.
> The *SOLSTICE* (1994, p. 12)

5.1. Introduction

Bertrand Russell once said "Every man, wherever he goes, is encompassed by a cloud of comforting convictions, which move with him like flies on a summer day" (Russell, 1938, p. 28). Similar viewpoints can be found in Bruner's writings. Bruner writes that our minds cannot be freed from our precommitment and he goes further to indicate that we do not have an "innocent eye" to penetrate the "aboriginal reality" (Bruner, 1988, p. 582). I feel that what Russell and Bruner said is true. Each and everyone of us has a standpoint from which we see, perceive and understand the world. The "flies", the "precommitment", and the "standpoint", I believe, are very important in naturalistic social science research and investigations, especially those of the researchers or the investigators. Canadian educator Chamberlin (1987) expressed the same concern, he stated, "Two researchers sitting in the same room, focusing on the same research questions, would still attend to different aspects of the setting and interaction, and would give the same events different interpretations" (Chamberlin, 1987, p. 3-4). Chamberlin (1987) and Carson (1984), another Canadian educator, believe that in a naturalistic social investigation, the researchers will bring their own biases, intuitions, and personal histories

to the research, and this will serve as "a filter screening out some events, emphasizing others" (Chamberlin, 1987, p. 4). According to Chamberlin (1987) and Carson (1984), sharing some knowledge of the researcher's personal history, beliefs and value system with the readers will help them to better understand how that "filter" works in the study. In the following text, some information of my personal history, learning and teaching experience, beliefs or theory related to language pedagogy which I formulated based upon my learning experience and teaching practice will be provided.

5.2. My narrative stories

I was born in a small agricultural county in a remote border province in the northeast part of the People's Republic of China. This little county is situated in the mountain area, and there is no railway to connect it to the outside world. My parents were ordinary clerks working for the county government. I am the eldest child in the family with two sisters and one brother. Though my parents, at that time, did not earn much money to buy luxury toys for their children, still they could provide enough good food to feed us. As a child growing up in the new socialist China, I felt I had a very good childhood.

In 1972 when I was eight years old, I entered a primary school in that small town and started my elementary education. By the time I was in primary school, the Great Cultural Revolution in mainland China was over. With the changing of the political atmosphere, people began to pay some attention to knowledge and formal education. My parents were very ordinary clerks in the government at that time and believed that if their children did not have any particular skills, it would be hard for them to survive in the coming society because they did not have enough power to control their children's future. Great emphasis was placed on our studies in the elementary school. I learned the Chinese

language and Arithmetic during my elementary school years. I can still remember at that time, besides the homework the teacher asked us to do at the end of the day, my parents gave me extra homework to do, such as reciting Chairman Mao's poetry. They knew very little about education, yet they believed that to learn good poetry and good prose by heart can exercise a person's mind and therefore improve intelligence and shrewdness. This is a very interesting view of education.

In 1976, after ten years of political turmoil and power struggle, China entered a relatively peaceful era. Great changes in the national education system were made and new educational policies were developed. This was the year I entered middle school. The second year I was in middle school the government changed its policies regarding enrollment of new university students. To the ordinary working people, this was great news, because it indicated that even children of powerless peasants, if they passed the college entrance examination, were able to enter a university. Graduates from the university would be assigned a stable job by the government and live a very different life. At that time, this was the only route for the children from ordinary families to access different opportunities in society. Like thousands and thousands of young Chinese boys and girls, I plunged myself into the fierce competition for the rare university student positions. To be successful in the examination, you had to know Chinese language and literature, history of China and history of the world, geography, mathematics, Marxist philosophy, and English language. The English language test for the entrance examination mainly focused on mastery of the grammar skills in English. The middle school instruction on all the subjects at that time was mainly oriented towards the college entrance examination. The English language instruction that I received at middle school was mainly rote memory of isolated grammar rules and vocabulary.

In 1982, when I was eighteen years of age, after a satisfactory performance on the college entrance examination, I entered a teacher's university in the capital city of the Province specializing in English language. At the university, I began to study English more formally and more seriously. Instruction of English language at that teacher's university was mainly carried out through the traditional Grammar-translation approach. Memorization of grammar rules and performance on grammar tests were stressed in the whole English language education curriculum. Listening, speaking, writing, and reading were not elevated to the position that they should be at. Fortunately, during my university education years, I met a Canadian professor. By constant interactions with him, I improved my English language communication skills. As I was in a teacher's university, I was also introduced to the Grammar-translation approach to EFL teaching.

In 1986, the same year I received my BA, I entered a master's program in the same university specializing in British and American Literature. During my three years of graduate study, I was introduced to some literary theories and several British and American novelists and poets. While doing my graduate study, I worked part-time as an English language teacher at the university teaching English to undergraduate English majors. The research topic for my master's thesis was on the symbolism in the American novelist Stephen Crane's novel *The Red Badge of Courage*.

In 1989, after I finished my MA degree, I was assigned to work as an English language teacher at a university. Like many other English language teachers, I also employed the Grammar-translation approach in my teaching practice.

In 1992, I enrolled in a Master of Education program at the University of Alberta and in 1994, I completed my M.Ed. and entered a doctoral program in elementary education.

5.3. My perceptions of language learning and teaching

After studying in this Canadian university for about two years, I felt that I had learned a lot. I felt my horizon of knowledge being broadened, and my mind became more active, sensitive to new ideas, and thirsty for knowledge. After attending some language arts courses, I began to understand that language is a vast and complex phenomenon. It is pervasive in human experience. Just as Lindfors states,

> Language is always and everywhere with us. It pervades every area of our waking lives--our family relationships, our friendships, our working relationships or even our loneliness. And those of us who carry on lively conversations or write great poetry in our dreams would argue that language pervades our hours of sleep as well as our hours of waking. (Lindfors, 1980, p.1)

The questions that people have been asking for many centuries about language, such as--What is language? How did language begin?, How does language change?, What is the relationship between language and consciousness or thinking? and How can language be used as a vehicle to restructure people's life?, have always interested me and stimulated me to learn more. My reading on some critical theorists' works, such as Paulo Freire, Peter McLaren, and Henry A. Giroux, led me to think about ways of putting language teaching and learning in a much broader social and political spectrum. As language permeates every aspect of our human experience, I felt that it should not be treated as an isolated phenomenon in teaching and learning in the classroom. In the following, I would like to summarize some of my reflections towards language learning while I am preparing this dissertation. I will mainly focus on the following issues: What is literacy? What is the relationship between language and consciousness? What can a language teacher like myself do in helping to build this society into a better, a more just and equal world for the generations to come?

5.3.1. What is literacy?

Venezky (1990) said that the term literacy is similar to such words as liberty, justice and happiness. It is very "complex and often elusive" (Venezky, 1990, p. 2). I believe that he is right. People with different agendas will often have very different definitions for a particular term. Most definitions that I found in the existing literature focus only on the functionality aspect of literacy. A typical definition of the term in this focus can be seen in a British document:

> A person is functionally literate when he has command of reading skills that permit him to go about his daily activities successfully on the job, or to move about society normally with comprehension of the usual printed expressions and messages he encounters. (British Association of Settlement, 1974, p. 256)

It can be seen that the importance of the learners' ability to fit into the existing circumstances and practice is heavily stressed. After reading some of the critical theorists' works, I am reluctant to accept this view. It seems to me functional literacy is an unworthy goal to be pursued in the educational program because I have a sense that the aims of such literacy is to arm the learners with the skills which help them to function in a print-dominated society at the lowest levels. The whole practice of functional literacy will not bring significant life changes to the learners. On the contrary, it equips the learners with the skills that prepare them to enter the work forces for the domination and exploitation by the dominant social groups. For me, the power of literacy does not only prepare learners to fit in with the existing sociopolitical structures, but rather it assists them to become more aware of inequities and existing contradictions in society in order to change them rather than adapt to them. The goal of literacy, I believe, is to help learners to be more fully human rather than merely machine-like tools to function for the interests

of others. Literacy, to me, is not only to read the printed language, but to read life and the world and to transform them.

5.3.2. What is the relationship between language and consciousness?

After reading some articles on phenomenology and attending courses on linguistics, I came to the realization that there is an intimate connection between the language we use and our thinking. We all know that language is a very important tool in our daily life. We come to know the world, comprehend great ideas and learn about ourselves through the language we use. Linguists Sapir (1929) and Whorf (1956) explored further into this notion. They argue that the language we use will influence or even shape our perception. In other words, our thinking and intuition can be transformed by the language we use. German philosopher von Humboldt (1963) also recognized the great force of language in defining our intellectual nature and in determining our relation to reality centuries ago. He believed that language not only functioned in communicating the results of cognitive activity, but also functioned in shaping cognition by transforming the chaos which we call the world into the ordered product of human knowledge. While studying the phenomologolical theories of language and consciousness, I thought about the writings by the British writer, George Orwell. In Orwell's imaginary novel *Nineteen Eighty-four* (Orwell, 1949), he draws a picture of the role of language in influencing and shaping people's thinking and consciousness in the socialist society of *Ingsoc*, English socialism. He named the language used in the society of *Ingsoc* as "Newspeak". He had a very interesting and illuminating explanation of the language in the appendix of *Nineteen Eighty-four*. From the explanation, we can see that language not only shapes consciousness and thinking, but see that there is a set of beliefs, assumptions, or mental habits which is at work behind language and contributing in shaping our thoughts and

consciousness. This set of beliefs, assumptions, or mental habits is what we usually call an "ideology". "An ideology", as Terry Eagleton has neatly put it, "exists because there are certain things which must not be spoken of" (Eagleton, 1976, p. 90). In this piece of writing, Orwell has rightly pointed out the close interconnectedness between language, consciousness, and ideology in an unreal world in his fiction. But unfortunately, Orwell failed through his false ideology-critique of language and society to recognize and reveal how the language that we use in this real exploitive capitalistic world shapes and eludes our thinking and consciousness.

5.3.3. What can a language teacher do in promoting social changes?

From my readings on the phenomenological and critical theories and my knowledge of the Chinese and the English languages, I have come to see that there is an implicit interconnectedness among thought, language, ideology, and the "real" world. I believe that language teaching and learning provides us an opportunity to assist the learners to examine this interconnectedness. Most of the language teachers, especially teachers in the capitalist countries, are not eager to admit this interconnectedness. It is very naive for teachers to accept the notion that language teaching and learning is purely technical and ideologically neutral and that language learning consists only in building up grammatical competence. If this assumption is true, it would make our teaching job relatively simple. But in reality, we all know that this view is wrong. We all know that language, with its many connotations and denotations, is trickier and more powerful than that.

Orwell (1946) is right in pointing out that language reflects the existing social conditions. Like other social practice, language is not neutral; it serves a particular interest or purpose. It is inherently ideological. It has a set of values and viewpoints

depending upon the way people speak and act while using the language. In a capitalist society, language is used to exploit, dominate, subdue, mystify, and domesticate. Feminists, in the Western world, for example, have forcefully and accurately shown us how subtle patriarchy is built into the English language. I believe that language is central for us to conduct, determine and understand all social life. A great sensitivity to words and sentences in a language, as Foucault (1973), Fay (1977, 1987) and Habermas (1984) have pointed out, will aid understanding because they carry within themselves a wealth of hidden meaning. A simple analysis of the language that we use everyday will shine light on us. Words such as "the entrepreneur" and "the special interest group", for example, carry a lot more meaning behind their surface value. The word "the entrepreneur" carries the images that successful businessmen do their best to build up factories or companies to provide employment to the jobless. It does not allude to anything about the benefits from exploitation of workers. While the word "the special interest group" suggests a very negative meaning in this society, it is the usual label that the dominant social groups have given to the people in poverty or people in need of social assistance. The dominant language of this society is clearly related to the mainstream social classes ideologically. This kind of language is employed to serve an ideological and political purpose: to distort the social reality and to maintain the status quo of the power groups in the society.

The capitalistic language used in this society does not serve the well-being of the people who are in poverty and who are jobless. But why do all of the people, including the ones who are not benefiting from the dominant capitalistic language use, still use the language and do not question it? The answer to this question seems to me to be involved with the problem of how we come by the language that we use daily. My knowledge in second language acquisition theories suggests that a distinction should be made between the "acquisition" of a language and "learning" of a language (Krashen, 1982, 1985; and Krashen and Terrell, 1983). Acquisition, according to Krashen (1982, 1985) and

Krashen and Terrell (1983), is a process of acquiring a language subconsciously by exposure to models and a process of trial and error in the language, without a process of formal teaching. This happens in natural settings which are meaningful and functional in the sense that the learners know that they need to acquire the language in order to function. This is how most people come to control their first language. Learning a language, on the other hand, is a process that involves conscious knowledge gained from teaching, though not necessarily from someone officially designated as a teacher. This teaching involves explanation and analysis, that is, breaking down the thing to be learned into analytic parts. It involves attaining, along with the matter being taught, some degree of meta-knowledge about target linguistic matters. It can be seen that much of our language is gained through "acquisition"; through unconscious examination of what we use every day. As a language teacher, I believe it is more important for us to help students to consciously examine the ideological and political nature (the hidden aspect) of the language through "learning". It is very important for us to know the other aspects and functions of the language that have been left out when we "acquire" the language.

5.3.4. Summary

Because of my views on how language, thought, ideology, and reality are interrelated, my observation and interpretation of Daquan Gao's classroom will be filtered in a way unique to me as a researcher. Other researchers with different beliefs would select and interpret different events in their unique ways. Readers are cautioned to keep in mind my personal beliefs when reading my report.

5.4. Limitations of the study

This research may be influenced by my previous second language learning and teaching experiences. While conducting the research and analyzing the data, my previous experiences may predispose me to emphasize the advantages of the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and the Audiolingual Method (ALM), and lead me to seek for a combination of the Grammar Translation Method, Audiolingual Method and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approaches to solve second language students' language teaching and learning problems. In order to decrease this aspect of influence and to broaden my perspective, I have contacted more professors and fellow graduate students, and read more books during the process of research.

CHAPTER SIX: THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

> ... contexts as vital factors affecting results; these contexts include physical, social, economic, and political. (Rigg, 1991, p. 536)

6.1. Introduction

In order to assist the reader to better understand the study, I have provided some further information about the context in this chapter. I provided a section on Chinese language and its uses in North America, a section on the Chinese-English bilingual education in Edmonton, and sections on Gao's school and his students. With the aim of assisting the readers to draw some implications for their own teaching and research work, I have provided a thick description of the context and the setting of the study.

6.2. Chinese language and Chinese language uses in the Chinese communities in North America

Chinese language, which includes all its living dialectal forms, is possibly one of the oldest forms of language that the world has known. It is the principal language in Asia and is utilized by more people than any other language in the world. Chinese language is rich in its various regional dialects. Dialects, as defined by some linguists, are the variations within a single language. Like people from many other language communities

and groups, people from the Chinese language community in North America, do not speak the Chinese language in precisely the identical manner. The Chinese dialectal differences are generally conceived by some people (both Chinese and non-Chinese) as indications of differences in education, religion, geographical region, social class, and other aspects of life. On the whole, the Chinese language dialects contain a lot of things in common with one another. All of them emanated from one mother language and they all share the same written form (which includes traditional (complex) Chinese characters and simplified Chinese characters) of ideography.

While following the classical linguistic approach and regarding the different variations in the Chinese language as "dialects", I also realized that those linguistic variations in Chinese language have lately been perceived as different distinct "languages" rather than one Chinese language. Some linguists argue that those variations in Chinese are the son or daughter branches from the same mother language, and owing to the dearth of shared intelligibility in speech between speakers of the different dialectal groups, they should be viewed as different languages. This view disregards the reality that those dialects share the same written form. In this study, for the convenience of the researcher, the different Chinese spoken variations will be termed as different "Chinese language dialects".

Within mainland China, the Chinese language dialects can be roughly classified into nine main groups: 1) the Yue Group (the Cantonese) includes speakers in the southern Guangdong Province and Hong Kong; 2) the Kejia Group (the Hakka) includes speakers in the northern eastern Guangdong Province; 3) the Amoy-Swatow Group includes speakers in southern Fujiang province; 4) the Min Group includes speakers in Fuzhou City; 5) the Wu Group (the Shanghainese) includes speakers in Suzhou and Shanghai; 6) the Xiang Group includes speakers in Hunan Province; 7) the Northern

Mandarin Group; 8) the Southwestern Mandarin Group; and 9) the Southern Mandarin Group (Forrest, 1973).

The three Mandarin versions of the Chinese language are somewhat dissimilar in pronunciation and vocabulary. However, their differences are much less than their similarity. Individuals from the three groups can generally comprehend each other's speech. It has also been observed that there are many more people in China using the Mandarin than any other Chinese language dialects. Mandarin was once viewed as linguistically sophisticated, refined, and as the symbol of elitism. In fact, as some linguists point out, other Chinese dialects, such as Cantonese, are as systematic and complete as Mandarin. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, these three Mandarin dialects were standardized, by having several thousands of complex Chinese written characters transformed and simplified. The Beijing Mandarin accent was considered the standard Mandarin pronunciation. This standardized Mandarin was named as "*Putonghua*" and was used as the national language of the People's Republic of China. The people in Taiwan are using a version of Mandarin. This version of Mandarin is very much the same in pronunciation with the "*Putonghua*". The only differences between the Taiwan version of Mandarin and the "Putonghua" is that the former uses a phonetic symbol system called *Zhuyin Fuhao* while the later uses a romanized phonetic symbol system called the *Pinyin system* and the Taiwan version Mandarin still uses the old complex written character codes.

The other six above mentioned Chinese dialects are spoken predominantly in the coastal and central regions of China. These dialects are put to use by about one-third of the Chinese language speaking population in China. These Chinese dialects vary greatly from each other in many aspects and differ extremely from Mandarin. However, the written form of these Chinese dialects is the same with each other and with Mandarin, that

is, the simplified Chinese character codes. It is this common written language that serves as a mechanism to bind people of various dialects together and enables them to communicate with one another within the country. All the Chinese people from these nine dialect groups, on the whole, practice common Chinese customs and culture. They share similar Chinese beliefs and Chinese traditions. In addition to common practices, these different dialect groups have their own regional subcultures in other aspects of life such as eating habits, religions, etc. However, these people are all willing to identify themselves as "Chinese" and "Chinese speakers".

Among the nine Chinese dialects, the Yue (namely the Cantonese) dialect has the largest number of speakers in North America. The written Chinese code is mainly complex Chinese characters. This is mainly caused by the large number of Chinese immigrants who came from Hong Kong and Guangdong Province during the last two decades, where Cantonese is the major vehicle of communication and they arrived in North American before the founding of the People's Republic of China when the simplified Chinese character written code system was adopted.

6.3. The Chinese-English bilingual program in Edmonton

The colossal growth of the Chinese population in Canada during the last two decades has firmly established a foundation for the Chinese people as a strong ethnic group. With the aims to achieve solidarity among the Chinese people and to maintain Chinese culture and language in the younger Chinese generations, many Chinese communities started to set up private funded language schools to teach Chinese language and culture and to strive for the opportunity to introduce Chinese language and culture into the Canadian educational system. These efforts were initiated long before the launching of the Federal Government Policy of Multiculturalism and Multilingualism in Canada (Lee,

1984). Great successes have been achieved in the area of Chinese language education in recent years. Many private funded part-time or weekend Chinese-English bilingual schools were established. Many important metropolitan cities in Canada have recognized some of those Chinese language schools and provided public funds for them.

The Chinese-English Bilingual Program of Edmonton came into existence in the fall of 1982. With the support of the Federal Multiculturalism and Multilingualism Policy, the program was created to offer the Chinese ethnic descendants in Edmonton an opportunity to retain and sustain their culture and language in Canadian society. A historical investigation on the establishment of this program indicated that the process of setting up this program was lengthy and agonizing. The organizing body, the Chinese community in Edmonton, had encountered many obstacles and numerous problems. Through the collective hard work of the whole Chinese community and a one year experiment in teaching Chinese, in the summer of 1983, the bilingual program was recognized by the Edmonton Public Schools Board, placed under the Edmonton Public Schools Board, and received full public funding. Although the majority of the students were from the Cantonese speaking family background, the spoken Chinese dialect they learned was Mandarin, the written Chinese they learned was the complex Chinese character code system and the pronunciation system was the *Zhuyin Fuhao*. There had been a large debate as to which Chinese dialect should be the target dialect, Mandarin or Cantonese, during the initial organizing process. The survey conducted by the Chinese Community in Edmonton showed that most of the families in the city were Cantonese speaking and that there were different opinions of which dialect should be the target dialect. The survey showed that about half of the parents wanted Cantonese as the target dialect while the other half wanted Mandarin as the target dialect. It is this issue that gave rise to many arguments and conflicts between the pro-Mandarin group and the pro-

Cantonese group during the organizational process of the program. The rationale for Mandarin as target dialect, as pro-Mandarin parents argued, included:

> 1. Mandarin is the "national dialect" of mainland China and Taiwan and has always been regarded as linguistically superior to the other dialects. It is the language of education and for long has been a symbol of the "educated" in the country. In contrast, Cantonese is a home language which can be taught by the parents and it is only used within its dialectal community.
> 2. If the students can keep up the standard and if the program is offered up to grade twelve in the future, they may continue their Chinese studies at the university. University studies are in the national language of Mandarin.
> 3. If children know the national language, they may have a better opportunity in some of the cross-cultural and diplomatic jobs.
> 4. Mandarin is easier to learn than other dialects as it has only four different tones and can be learned by the method of *Zhuyin Fuhao* (Spelling system). (Lee, 1984, p. 87)

On the other hand, the rationale for "Cantonese" as the dialect, as argued by the pro-Cantonese, is the following:

> 1. As Cantonese cannot be learned by the method of *Zhuyin Fuhao* which has nine different tones, it is harder for the children to learn. Thus, the students should be taught in Cantonese together with the universal written orthography in the elementary grades. Once the children have a strong foundation in their mother tongue, it will not be hard for them to learn Mandarin or other dialects of the Chinese language.
> 2. Cantonese is a more popular dialect, especially in North America. If the children know this dialect, they can communicate better with their grandparents, relatives and other peers in their own ethnic community. Through the communication with people of the same ethnic background and with grandparents, culture will easily be maintained. Thus, in order to maintain culture and ethnic identity in the younger generation, the most popular dialect or the "mother tongue" of the majority Chinese students should be taught.

> 3. There will probably be no support system given by the parents for the children learning Mandarin as the Cantonese parents who do not know Mandarin will not be able to practice with their children at home.
> 4. The idea of "mother tongue" instruction will be distorted if Mandarin is taught in the program. As over eighty per cent of the children are from Cantonese speaking families, the learning of Mandarin is actually learning a new language. It is not the learning of the "mother tongue" at all.
> 5. For a four-year old child who comes from a Cantonese speaking family, it will be very difficult for him or her to learn two Chinese dialects and a new language: Cantonese at home and Mandarin and English at school. Even though the Chinese language has a common orthography for all dialects, spoken forms are very different. Thus, to these children, they are actually learning three languages at the same time without much practice in any of them. (Lee, 1984, p. 88)

The majority of the pro-Mandarin parent group were Cantonese speakers themselves, but they were in favor of the proposition that their children learn Mandarin. Most of them were well educated and of higher socio-economic status. Some of them were from Taiwan and Vietnam where Mandarin is widely used. Most of the mothers of this group were housewives who had more time for community work. This group of people had great enthusiasm in the planning of the program. The people in the pro-Cantonese group were mainly of lower socio-economic status and not many of them could afford to volunteer their time in community service projects. It was perhaps because of the above mentioned variables that the pro-Mandarin parents were able to exert more influence in the organizational process and in the implementation of Mandarin as the dialect of instruction. These wealthier and more educated pro-Mandarin parents were also the group who later helped in organizing the board and who applied for a subsidy for the establishment of a Chinese-English bilingual program. They incorporated Mandarin as the dialect of instruction in the school. Although a lot of pro-Cantonese parents were discontented with the decision for Mandarin instruction, there was nothing much they

could do about it. But one thing that both of these two groups agreed upon was that the written code students should learn in school was the complex Chinese character system (Traditional Chinese Characters).

In 1983, the Edmonton Chinese Bilingual Education Association (ECBEA) was established. It is a registered non-profit organization of volunteers dedicated to promoting the understanding of Chinese language. Members in the ECBEA comprise parents with children enrolled in the Chinese-English Bilingual Program. The main goals of this organization, as stated in the ECBEA newsletter *Understanding Through Education*, are:

> 1) Promote learning and understanding of the Chinese language and culture.
> 2) Serve as a voice on behalf of parent members, committees and organizations regarding matters pertaining to Chinese bilingual education in Edmonton Public Schools.
> 3) Assist in establishing new programs or expansion of the Chinese Bilingual Program.
> 4) Coordinate student recruitment campaigns.
> (Edmonton Chinese Bilingual Education Association, 1994, p. 13)

ECBEA recognizes the importance of a second language in today's global economy. It believes that an Asian language (Chinese) in particular has the potential to be highly beneficial to a young person seeking employment in a very competitive job market. ECBEA also extends its welcoming arms and opens the door of the Chinese-English Bilingual Program to children from different ethnic background. ECBEA aims not only to assist students to acquire a second language (Chinese) which it believes will enhance students' future, and to gain an understanding of the Chinese culture, but also targets to broaden children's view of the world and its people.

By the end of 1994, according a statistics from the ECBEA, there were seven public schools in Edmonton which have Chinese-English bilingual programs involving

800 students in total. Once the Chinese-English bilingual program was offered only from kindergarten to grade six but now the Chinese language program has also become an advanced language arts program at the junior and senior high levels. ECBEA regards the Chinese-English bilingual program is a very unique program. The growth of the program was well documented by ECBEA. Based upon the previous statistics, the ECBEA estimates that a continued expansion of the program will happen in the near future as more people become aware of the opportunities that will open to children who access the program (Edmonton Chinese Bilingual Education Association, 1994).

In the last three to five years, with the rapid increase of immigrants from mainland China, another group of parents and teachers came onto the stage and challenged this Chinese education system in Edmonton. I named this new group "the function oriented group". Most parents and teachers of this group have recently immigrated from mainland China. Almost all of them have had higher education in China and Canada. Facing the rapid economic changes and progress in China and other Asian countries and regions and the financial situations in North America, this group argued that the Chinese education opportunities in Edmonton should be oriented to the future rather than stick to the past which emphasize old traditions and old customs. The Chinese-English bilingual school should equip the attending students with authentic Chinese language skills which will help them to function in Asian countries. They proposed that the school should teach the student to use the simplified Chinese characters rather than the complex ones and the "*Pinyin*" phonetic system rather than the *Zhuyin Fuhao* system, as the complex Chinese characters and the *Zhuyin Fuhao* system are difficult for the students to master and they are already not used in Mainland China and some other Asian countries. The argument was hot and the debate was passionate. Till now, there is no resolution in sight.

6.4. Gao's school

Gao's school, the Huamei Elementary school, was located in Edmonton. It was twenty minutes drive from the down town Chinese community. This Huamei Elementary School has for years had a good reputation and enjoyed great popularity within the Chinese community in Edmonton. Some parents lived in other parts of Edmonton, but they were willing to spend the time to send their children to this school. There are a number of reasons for the school's popularity; one is its large Chinese faculty. Out of the full time teaching staff of 31, eight are Chinese Canadians. Most of the Chinese-Canadian teachers and aides are bilingual, biliterate and very well educated in Canada. All of them work in the bilingual program. They are able to communicate with their non-English or limited-English speaking Chinese students and parents.

The bilingual and bicultural nature of the majority of the staff offers a kind of shelter and comfort to the new Chinese immigrants and their children and provides them, in their new country, with a learning environment that is not completely outlandish. The coordinator of the Chinese-English program is a Chinese-Canadian. To some degree, this symbolized the great Chinese orientation of the program. To the parents and people in the community, she represents and calls attention to the "Chinese" character of the whole program.

Besides the Chinese orientation of the school staff and student population, the school's location offers additional security and convenience for the parents. Most Chinese parents do not like the downtown violence, crime, and decay. The large Chinese student population in the school, in the minds of many parents and teachers, explained the lack of disciplinary and drug problems, and the absence of interethnic tension and confrontation that have plagued other schools in the City.

The school's maintenance Chinese Bilingual program is another reason for its popularity among Chinese parents. Many teachers and teacher aides have pointed out to me that the students in this bilingual program are primarily ethnic Chinese children. Some parents wanted their children in the program not so much because of the bilingual instruction, but because of the homogeneous ethnic composition. These parents thought that their children could learn much better in an all-Chinese classroom where disciplinary, drug, and racial problems did not exist. In addition, there were parents who sincerely want their children to preserve their Chinese language and culture, and thus have tried very hard to get them enrolled in the school's Chinese-English bilingual program.

Not only did the parents want to send their children to Huamei School, but many teachers considered Huamei School as a choice working place as well. Many of them articulated the happiness they have felt to be able to teach and to educate, instead of devoting a lot of class time and energy to discipline. Chinese students, according to them, do not exhibit serious management problems that many students in many other schools of the city do. Once a teacher gets into Huamei School, he or she does not want to leave, and this reality contributes a great deal to the stability of the school personnel. However, due to the recent provincial and federal funding cuts on education, many teachers suddenly have had to counter the possibility of salary reduction or, worse, being dismissed in spite of their excellent work and many years of teaching experience.

6.5. Gao's students

At the beginning of my observation, there were a total of thirty students in the sixth-grade Chinese-English bilingual class. Thirteen of them were male students and seventeen of them were female students. During the middle of the term, one boy transferred to another school. All of the children were of Chinese ancestry. Most of them

were born in Canada and were second or third generation Chinese-Canadians. Only four of them were born in foreign countries, but they started their schooling in Canada. With the exception of two boys in this class whose home language was English, the rest of the class reported Cantonese or another Chinese dialect as the dominant language used at home. It is interesting to note that some of these children speak a mixture of English and Chinese when speaking with their parents or older relatives. From my own and Gao's observations, it is safe to say that most of the children in the class are able to communicate with each other in Mandarin Chinese and in English. Generally speaking, the socioeconomic status of the children's families is low. Most of the parents are wage earners in the restaurants, stores, and sewing factories in or around Edmonton's China Town. Their professions include restaurant dish washer, seamstresses, hotel maids, meat packers, or movers.

Most of Gao's students perceived there was a difference between the Chinese-English bilingual class and English unilingual classes. Some of them said, "We have Chinese lessons here", "We use Chinese and English", "We talk more Chinese in here", and "We have Chinese teachers and all Chinese students". Some students indicated that the bilingual program was "hard", but they enjoyed it because it gave them a chance to learn two languages or maintain Chinese. As one child said, "When I grow up, I can use both". Some other students indicated that the bilingual class is easier in some respects. Two mentioned the fact that with a bilingual teacher, if they misunderstood the English, they could get an explanation in Chinese. In the same vein, one student said the regular unilingual classes "aren't easy" and another said they were "harder".

It remains a popular belief, not only in the general public but in the school as well, that all the Chinese children are high achievers. Even among the teachers, Chinese students have a reputation for being very attentive, hard-working, and highly competitive

and motivated. They will learn under any conditions, and they rarely present discipline problems. Furthermore, Chinese parents are known to put a very high value on their children's education and school achievement. They are willing to do anything to provide support, guidance, or pressure for the children to succeed. Perhaps because of this common belief, the idea was seldom raised in the school that the Chinese children who went through the bilingual program might not succeed academically. I think probably such high and positive teacher expectations may well account for the success of the Chinese children. Occasionally a regular or a bilingual teacher might claim that his or her class is doing better academically than the ones in the other program, but in general, this is not the case. The common observation of the regular and bilingual teachers is that both programs did well in a similiar manner.

6.6. A typical day in Gao's school

A typical day in the school commences at 8:40 AM for most of the students, and at 8:30 AM for the teaching staff. Parents often drop their children off at the school before the official school starting time. Some parents even drop their children off as early as 8 o'clock in the morning. Starting from 8 o'clock in the morning, children can be seen playing on the school grounds. Students are not allowed to enter the classroom until their scheduled class commencement time. Lunch intermission starts at 11:40 AM, and it is the same for the entire school. Some mothers and grandmothers who reside adjacent to the school or work in the factories a few blocks away from the school show up to take their children home for lunch. At the closure of the school day, many parents and grandparents can be seen waiting for their children and grandchildren in the hallways or in the schoolyard.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DATA PRESENTATION, DATA DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

> To indicate anything, human beings must see it from their perspective; they must depict it as it appears to them. (Blumer, 1969, p. 22)

7.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I endeavor to present some data and offer some analyses on those data in the expectation that this process will provide some insights towards the research questions which were set out at the inception of this study.

During the period of my observation in Gao's classroom, I collected much meaningful and insightful data. I chose from the data pool data which the participant and I regarded as typical occurrences in the participant's daily classroom teaching activities. The purpose of presenting these data is to reveal the beliefs that the participant holds and the reasons for the learning environments he creates. Besides the descriptive data, some interview data will also be presented to explore and analyze the participant's teaching philosophy within the theoretical and practical frameworks of whole language philosophy.

In the process of selecting data from the data pool for presentation, the process of summarizing the data, and the data interpreting process, three fellow graduate students were invited to comment on the process, the data selection and discussion, and the

findings of the research. The supervisor of this research was also consulted several times about the process of data presentation, discussion, and conclusion.

During the period when I was in Gao's Chinese language class, I discovered that almost all of the time when Gao talks in the class, he uses Chinese and most of the students also talk to him and communicate with each other in Chinese. Gao had set up a rule to encourage all his students to speak the Chinese language in his class. As this research focused mainly on the participant's teaching and his teaching philosophy, rather than on the linguistic aspects of the Chinese language, the research information is presented in English rather than Chinese. As most of the time, Gao and his students spoke the Chinese language, I will not specifically address which language they were using in the data presentation. I expect that the readers will understand that all the oral and written communication in or outside the classroom described in this dissertation was done in Chinese unless I specifically state otherwise.

7.2. Students publish their own book and set up a government to govern themselves

After a class, a student came to me and showed me a hand made book. The book was all in the Chinese language. The cover of the book had a beautiful painting of flowers. The title of the book was *Women de Jingli*, in English it meant "Our experience". The student flipped several pages, and finally came to an article. He pointed to the article and said, "This is my article. I wrote this story." I read through this article. It was a nicely written travel log. It tells the story of he and his family going to British Columbia during the summer vacation. They visited some fruit farms and did some sightseeing in British Columbia.

After I finished this article, I went through some other articles in the little booklet. They were all written by the students in this class. Every student had a little piece of writing in it. It was a nice collection of the students' writing in the Chinese language. During the recess period, I talked to Gao about this student-published book. Gao explained,

> The publication of this little book is one of my efforts to try to make the learning and classroom teaching more student centered. I do not believe that the teacher should be the center of the class. On the contrary, I in fact believe that students should be the center of the class. A teacher, I think, should not only simply transmit his knowledge to the students. A good teacher should be able to use the students' old or existing knowledge and experience to help them to acquire new concepts and perspectives. I believe it is very important for us to bring the students' experiences and their world to the class. It is always very important to draw materials from their backgrounds, their interests, and their strengths and to include what the students know and what the students interests are in their process of learning. I believe, by doing this, I can make Chinese language learning in class more student engaging and effective....While teaching in China, like many other teachers, I also used a teacher centered approach in second language teaching. But after several years study in Canada, my concept of knowledge and learning changed. I believe learning can be effective only when the learners are actively involved. In order to involve the students in the process of language development, to follow students' interests and their existing knowledge are most crucial. (Gao, 09/12/1995)

Besides publishing student's books, Gao tried some other methods to involve the students and put them in the center of the process of Chinese language learning. During the period of my observation, he used student's brainstorming many times to help him select topics for class discussion, composition topics, field trips and other learning activities.

After the recess, another class period started. Gao came in and announced yesterday's election results. He asked his students to form different political parties to represent themselves and to govern themselves. Students decided by themselves in which parties they wanted to participate. There were all together four political parties formed in this class. They were Liberal, NDP, Conservative and National Party. "During this election," Gao said, "The National Party won the majority and now they have the power to decide on some significant events of this class."

Later, Gao told me he used this method to elicit students' interests and then he worked with the student government to decide what could be the focus of this class. He also mentioned that he was responsible for this class's social studies subject and believed that playing government in the class could help students have a deeper understanding of how the Canadian federal government works. He also told me that they had attended the city council meeting and learned to set up a procedure of how to conduct the student government.

Other kinds of student-centered activities can also be observed in Gao's classroom. Gao asked his students to assist him to compile a book of reading materials. The students took the reading materials, read through them, and then decided which part needed a note or explanation at the end of the reading, and then came back to Gao for clarification on some difficult points. After the students understood the reading completely, they would take the reading to the computers and type them for final compilation. All those student-centered activities, some focusing on assisting the students to understand and see the Chinese language (the whole), and some focusing on helping the students to pay attention to the details of the Chinese language, were usual occurrences in Gao's classroom.

7.2.1. Discussion and analysis: Language learning should be student centered as learning is the active knowledge construction by the students

Gao's teaching practice and philosophy demonstrated a very significant principle of whole language pedagogical philosophy. That is, learning (such as language learning) should be student centered rather than teacher centered. Goodman (Freeman and Freeman, 1992) indicated that this whole language student-centered principle can be excellently illustrated in one of Billy Keane's *Family Circus* cartoons. In the cartoon, Billy leads his younger sister, Dolly, into their home after school. Billy says to his mother, "Dolly's school would be better if they did not have that lady up front talkin' all the time." A principle of whole language is that teachers focus their class or lesson on their students. They will start from what their students know. They have teaching activities that build on their students' interests. Using students' previous knowledge and their interests, the whole language teacher creates effective contexts in which their students can learn and construct their knowledge. In whole language, it is believed that learning is not simply the transmission of information (that is a teacher teaches in the front and the students memorize what he or she says).

The traditional concept of teaching is that the teacher should act as the source of all knowledge by standing up in the front of the classroom imparting knowledge and directing instruction. This comes from the common sense assumption of what knowledge is and how learning should happen. Learning, as the common sense approach holds, in the simplest terms, goes something like this,

> Learning is essentially habit formation. Effective learning is the establishment of 'good' or 'desirable' habits and the prevention of and/or elimination of 'bad' or 'undesirable' ones. Habits are formed through association between stimuli and response. The degree to which something is learned is a function of the strength of the association between stimulus

> and response. Repetition strengthens the associative bonds between stimulus and response. (Cambourne, 1987, p. 46)

The common sense conception of knowledge is that it is an immutable body of human experiences which can be broken down into several constituent parts. It further holds that learning is easier when the whole is broken into small constituent parts. When students master these individual constituent parts, the students are then believed to have mastered the whole. The sum of small parts is equal to the whole. Teaching is conceived to be the teacher transmitting knowledge to the students. The teacher's role is very important in the student's learning process. The teacher decides what to learn and how to learn. Knowledge is what the teacher teaches. The Grammar-translation method in the field of second language education is the product of such thinking.

However, many educational researchers and teachers disagree with the traditional views of knowledge and learning. Some of them even stand up to challenge these old-fashioned viewpoints. New thinkers and educators believe knowledge is socially constructed. In the process of learning, they hold that learners should not be regarded as passive. Barnes (1976), one of those who strongly promotes the idea that knowledge is socially constructed, argues that learning involves learners' dynamic participation. Vygotsky (1978) has found convincing evidence in his research to support this view of learning. He says that concept formation in children is a process in which adults or more capable peers help them solve problems that are a little beyond their current ability. He holds that what children could first do only with the help of others, they can do later by themselves. Gao apparently agrees with Barnes (1976) and Vygotsky (1978). He said,

> After arriving in Canada, I have been strongly influenced by the humanistic movement in education and the principles of democracy. I believe having a student-centered classroom and giving more power to students is the concrete realization of the concept of democracy in our daily life. I believe

> that teachers should serve as facilitators rather than depositors of information. In my class, I tried to have students take more responsibility for their own learning. I asked them to express their needs and preferences, make decisions, and initiate learning. (Gao, 09/12/1995)

Educator Dewey wrote in his *My Pedagogic Creed* that "the child is the starting point, the center and the end" (Dewey, 1929, p. 12) of all the class. Gao seems to favor this view of teaching. He said,

> In the field of second language education, the traditional view of schooling was reinforced. Usually, with the second language learners, the temptation to have a teacher centered classroom arises because the perception is that the teacher has the target language proficiency that the students need. Therefore, all knowledge must come from the teacher. I feel, we should always remember, that our second language students are not deficient. They are just normal children like other students. They should be granted the power to control themselves and to control what and how they should learn. (Gao, 09/12/1995)

Building upon children's strengths, as many educators observe (Freeman and Freeman, 1988, Nunan, 1988, Weaver, 1990, and Carrasquillo, 1993), language teachers can create a safeguarded learning climate in which the students can arduously participate and dare to take risks, rather than being afraid of answering for fear of making errors and divulging their weaknesses. Once, in Gao's classroom, Gao encouraged a student whose Chinese was not very good but the student was good at Chinese painting by asking him to display his works for the class. This student was recognized for his talent and other students also had an exposure to the Chinese art of painting.

Centering on the experiences and interests of the students, as believed by the research participant, teachers can build self-esteem, foster confidence, and may be able to expand potentials in their students.

7.3. A meaningful reading and writing lesson

Before the start of the class, Gao told me that he believed his students must be involved in authentic reading and writing to become competent readers and writers of Chinese language. In the class, I observed that students read whole texts on topics which they regarded as important to them. The students also wrote about their reading. I observed that there were no isolated vocabulary lists, no oral repetition drills, or long grammar explanations and exercises in Gao's class.

As most of Gao's students like to read ghost stories, Gao decided that he would let his students read some Chinese ghost stories in this class. From the school library, Gao borrowed a pile of ghost story books. The class began with a discussion of some famous Chinese ghost story writers. Gao explained to the students that many ancient Chinese ghost story writers wrote a ghost story to tell a lesson or a moral. While he was speaking, students were given the opportunity to examine some of the story books.

After that, Gao read a ghost story to the students. This ghost story happened in a China town. Many of Gao's students had lived, or had relatives living in a China town area, and they listened to the story with great interest. When Gao invited the students to write about the story and the China town, the response was enthusiastic. Student Jennifer began her response by reflecting on her experiences in China town:

> My memories of China town were very bad. Once, when my grandma and I finished shopping in China town and were on our way to the LRT station, a man stopped us and asked for some change. My grandma was a kind woman. She took out her purse and gave one dollar to the man. But the man was not happy with one dollar, he looked around and saw nobody was around, he quickly snatched the purse from my grandma and ran

away. I met a real ghost. (Jennifer, 10/10/1995, translated from the Chinese language)

Jennifer's Chinese language writing was not perfect. There were some Chinese characters that she could not write. But cleverly, she used the *Zhuyin Fuhao* to spell the character sounds and put *Zhuyin Fuhao* spellings in the places where the Chinese characters were required. Though there were some missing Chinese characters, the teacher, the students could still read her article and understood her ideas perfectly.

The third activity that Gao conducted in this class was to put up on the wall the writings done by the students. This activity generated a great deal of interest. Students in the class discussed and shared their stories. All the activities in the classroom were conducted in the Chinese language. The students were all trying to express themselves in Chinese, but sometimes when they were stuck in Chinese, they would use the English language to rescue themselves.

7.3.1. Discussion and analysis: Learning, including language learning, proceeds from whole to part

Gao believed that in activities such as the one above, learning could move from whole to part. In this ghost story class, students responded to the whole story, not just part of it. Complete full texts, as Gao believed, could provide more comprehensible input to the students than did the fragmented texts. The students' written responses were full pieces of writing. They were not constrained or limited. Gao indicated that only when writers produced whole texts from the start were they able to develop an adequate understanding of the writing process.

When Gao was asked why he abandoned the traditional methods which focused on word, sentence, and paragraphs and embraced a totally different one which focused on the whole, he responded with a story. Gao used this story to explain why he thought the whole language approach was more important than the "parts approaches" (traditional approaches). He said,

> Once, one of my teacher friends told me a story about his teaching experience in Canada. The story goes like this. Once, he was teaching how to make Chinese dumplings with a group of students in his Chinese language class. Chinese dumplings, which is also called *Jiaozhi*, is a kind of food very popular in the Northeast part of China. Although many people in Edmonton are ethnic Chinese, they do not know how to make *Jiaozhi*. In that class, my teacher friend brought all the ingredients to make *Jiaozhi* and showed them to his students. He passed out some pieces of ginger, and then asked the students what they could tell him about it. They looked at the ginger, they smelled it, they felt it. One of the students said, "It smells funny!" After that my teacher friend collected the ginger and passed around some *Huajiao*. The children did not know what it was. Some tasted it and decided that they did not like it. One said, "It tastes hot and like pepper." Then my teacher friend passed around some *Daliao*. They were brittle and dry, and looked somewhat like dry tree peel. After that he passed around some other ingredients. After all the students examined all the ingredients, my teacher friend said, "Now, we are going to make *Jiaozhi*. Using all these things you have looked at, we will make *Jiaozhi*. How do you think it will taste?" "Yucky!" shouted several students. "I am not going to eat it," claimed one of his students, "Some of the things you passed out do not smell or taste good." But the students in my friend's class were intrigued by the ingredients of *Jiaozhi* that my friend passed around. They tried to use their previous experience with food to forecast what *Jiaozhi* would taste like. However, despite the fact that they may have smelled and even tasted each of the ingredients, they could not mentally put the odors and tastes together into a final product. The individual tastes of ginger, *Daliao*, *Huajiao* and others simply did not add up to the taste of *Jiaozhi*. On the surface level, I am telling a

> classroom teaching story. On a metaphorical or philosophical level, it tells us why some educational practices make learning hard for our students and why I came to embrace whole language philosophy. My teacher friend presented all the ingredients that can make up *Jiaozhi* to the students. Even the students experienced all the small parts of the recipe in isolation, they could not predict the whole; or what *Jiaozhi* would taste like. The taste of *Jiaozhi* is different from the tastes of all its constituent parts. The moral of this story, as I see it, is that knowing the parts doesn't ensure the knowledge of the whole. (Gao, 10/10/1995)

Gao then went on to elaborate on this point. He said that the process of acquiring a language involved learning which moves from whole to parts, although it sometimes did not look that way on the surface level. Gao said,

> Most students who had attended university in China would remember this kind of teaching. In the English class, the students studied the verb *to be* one week and the next week they started to study the *irregular verbs*. They memorized lists of words and then translated sentences from Chinese to English and from English to Chinese. After two years of studying English language at the university, they might be able to ask a few questions in English, but they could not understand the answers they got in English language. (Gao, 10/10/1995)

The method of second language instruction which Gao mentioned was commonly called Grammar Translation Method (GTM). As Gao observed, it was not a very effective teaching method in second language education because of the fact that this method did not encourage an overall understanding of the target language. Gao believed that the whole was more than the sum of its constituent parts in the learning. Gao argued that understanding the whole provides an important context in which the parts were naturally embedded.

Freeman and Freeman (1992) observe that when children acquire oral language, they first speak single words like "Mama" or "milk", then they produce two word sentences like "want milk", and only later on when they are a little older they are able to speak complete sentences. On the surface level, they suggest this procedure shows that language develops from the parts; the single words, to phrases, to complete sentences. But they also point out that children speaking single words when only a few months old, often use these to represent complete sentences.

Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1962) believes that word meanings develop from whole to part in a very utilitarian way in young children. Vygotsky (1962) writes,

> In regard to meaning...the first word of the child is a whole sentence. Semantically, the child starts from the whole, from a meaningful complex, and only later begins to master the separate semantic units, the meanings of words, and to divide his formerly undifferentiated thoughts into those units. (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 126)

Freeman and Freeman (1992) and Vygotsky (1962) appear to suggest that in children's processes of acquiring the oral language, they commence with the conceptions or ideas that they want to convey in one individual word, and in back of this stage, they learn to utilize more words to convey the ideas or the concepts. With their growth in the ability to use the language, children will be more capable of annexing more particulars to their utterances. The maturation of children's mental and physical beings will move their speech towards the accustomed adult manner of speaking.

Cambourne and Turbill (1987) also indicate that children's process of acquiring the written language is very much the same as acquiring the oral language. Their language acquisition studies on Sonia, a native Greek child, may shed light on the validity of this view. In her beginning stages of writing in the English language, according to Cambourne and Turbill (1987), Sonia used her self-invented sentence *Iwtmh* to express

the idea of *I went to my house*. This illustrates that when children first start to use written language, they often write a single letter to represent a whole word. This is also true for learners of Chinese language. From my observation in Gao's classroom and my teaching experience in China, I found that many children learning Chinese use *Pinyin* or *Zhuyin Fuhao* to represent the Chinese characters that they could not write. It appears that Freeman and Freeman (1992) are correct in pointing out that in the development of both oral and written language, children commence with a whole (or a context) and only later acquire an understanding of the constituent parts (the word or the phrase).

Goodman's writing also reflects some of these views. Goodman (1986) says that when people acquire a language they usually first will be "able to use whole utterances" and he also observes that "Only later can we see the parts in the whole and begin to experiment with their relationship to each other and to the meaning of the whole" (Goodman, 1986, p. 19). After pointing out this perspective, Goodman goes a step further and suggests that parts are more burdensome to learn than the wholes because they are not so concrete and tangible.

In Gao's Chinese language classroom, Chinese print characters are everywhere. There are books of different sizes in the book racks, charts with poetry and songs, lists of the students' favorite children's authors with the books they have written, stories written by the children, and a message board for leaving messages to students and other classmates. Gao and his students read, wrote, and talked together daily in the Chinese language. The students sometimes read books by one children's author and discussed how that author's books were the same or different. They also read Chinese poetry and sung popular Chinese songs.

The students write their own stories in Chinese even though they do not know how to write all the Chinese characters. They have developed a very clever way to

overcome their limited writing vocabulary by using *Zhuyin Fuhao* spellings to represent Chinese characters. Although different students may be at different stages of the writing process at any give time, they read their stories to Gao and to each other. They read and wrote messages on the message board. The students were constantly writing, reading, and discussing whole Chinese character texts which were of interest to them.

When asked how he taught reading in Chinese, Gao explained that he did not teach reading directly. He said, "My students learn to read by reading." He did not teach sounds and words of the Chinese language in isolation. His goal in teaching was not to teach separate language skills to his students. He said, "Good readers can do phonics, but students do not need to practice phonics to learn to read and write." He indicated that his focus was always on the whole, on communicating through reading and writing as well as speaking and listening, and in that process he believed that the students were able to develop the parts, the sounds and skills by themselves. He also emphasized that focusing on the whole did not necessarily mean forgetting all of the studies on the separate parts. In students' process of moving from the whole to the parts, he also helped the students carefully study the parts. He also added that not all students in his classroom become independent readers at the same time, but by continual exposure to the reading of meaningful Chinese language texts, he believed that all the students would be led into reading and writing and ultimately become skilled Chinese language users.

After several years of study at the University, Gao realized that all learning, including second language learning, involves a gradual process of differentiating the parts out of the whole. His knowledge of this conception of learning has led him to change his "Chinese as a second language" teaching. Instead of beginning with the discrete bits of language, such as grammatical items, vocabulary, and details of the Chinese language, he attempted to surround his students with a wide range of the target language. Gao used

specific techniques, such as embedding the linguistic elements of communication in a rich nonlinguistic context, to make the Chinese language easy to understand. He recognized that language was less difficult to learn when it is kept whole, but he also knows that the traditional sink-or-swim method, which is to plunge the students into the target language context or environment and believe that the students will acquire the language, is not an appropriate way to handle second language students either. In his class, as I observed, Gao tried to provide opportunities for students dealing with the full range of the Chinese language to trace from the context that which would assist them to understand what they were experiencing or learning.

7.4. Learning from each other

During one recess time, Gao told me that he used a lot of student group project activities in his class. During my observation in his classroom, I focused on some of these activities.

Gao went back to China during one of the summer holiday periods. He helped his Huamei school set up a sister school relationship with an elementary school in his home country. He talked with the teachers in that school and arranged a pen pal letter writing program among the students in these two schools. The students in both schools felt that they learned a lot from this program. Their topics of discussion in their letters ranged from politics to experiences of Chinese language learning. They shared their views on the relationships between students and teachers, and students and their parents. This activity provided students with opportunities to use the written form of Chinese for real purposes as they interacted with students from a different country.

Another activity Gao used very often was student tutoring. Gao invited his former students back to the Chinese language class. Sometimes, Gao asked those senior students to read to two or three junior students in Chinese. Sometimes, Gao asked them to conduct one to one paired reading activities. Gao observed that both his former students and his present students could learn something from these kinds of interactions. They not only learned Chinese language skills, but also acquired social skills. Gao told me that the purpose for using this student tutoring program was to create situations in which students can develop Chinese language abilities.

The student tutoring program in Gao's class provided opportunities for social interaction with other student in senior grades. Gao's other cooperative learning activities provides students with suitable occasions for interactions within the classroom. Gao asked students to form different learning groups and then assigned them different topics to explore and after that he would ask them to present their findings to the whole class. One group of students prepared a topic on the human body. After several weeks of research, the students in this group had all become experts on different parts of the human body. They read about the human body system, wrote about their readings for class work, made a model of the human body, and decorated it with different types of pictures of the human body, and then presented their knowledge to other students in the classes. Gao observed that the students developed a great deal of written and oral Chinese language as they worked on their group projects. They conducted their research, did their writing, and made their presentations in small groups. As they worked together, Gao observed that both their language ability and their understanding of the content area knowledge improved tremendously. The key to the success of this kind of group project, Gao said, was cooperative learning.

7.4.1. Discussion and analysis: Learning takes place as students engage in meaningful social interaction

Gao strongly believes that a second language learner develops his or her target language proficiency through interactions with other people. This view of learning is completely different from the traditional belief about learning a second language.

Piaget was the most powerful supporter of the concept that learning is an individual's solitary self-exploration activity. In his works and research, Piaget (1955) documented many cases of how children's understanding of the world (knowledge) grew or improved as they encountered and worked with the world. He believed that intellectual and cognitive development in a human being follows a commonly followed pattern or stages which are determined by our human beings' biological maturation process. He concluded that children become more and more cognitively and intellectually developed, and can learn more things when they are biologically or developmentally "ready" to do so. He believed that our human learning process follows our biological development (or maturation) process. Language, according to Piaget, is a vehicle that assists children to make known the concepts and ideas that they have acquired. In his observation research with children, Piaget discovered that children's play was not cooperative but solitary and parallel. He metaphorically expressed this as two children might be in the same sandbox, but they were not really interacting with one another.

Different from Piaget, many researchers have held contrary beliefs about learning. Some feel that the social interaction among learners is very important and have placed great value on the part of social interaction in the children's language acquisition and concept construction process. Vygotsky (1978, 1962) regarded language as a means for thinking and felt that children employ language to tackle problems. Learning, Vygotsky

believed, is a process in which children first interact with others, and then when they have acquired the language, they use it as a tool to think through problems by themselves and then finally solve them. Vygotsky believed that we can discover two kinds of levels of mental development in our children. The first one is what they can do alone and the second is what they can do with the assistance of others. The difference between these two kinds of development constitutes Vygotsky's famous concept of the "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD). He defined this zone as "the distance between the actual development as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Like Vygotsky, many researchers in today's field of education believe that children first develop concepts and language by talking to adults or more capable peers as they solve a real problem.

In the field of second language education, educators have argued the importance of social interaction in second language development. Krashen (1982) developed a model of language acquisition which was similar to Piaget's. In Krashen's model, dynamic involvement and active understanding of the individual student is of great importance in promoting the happening of the learning acts. Krashen believes that we acquire language when we receive enough comprehensible input that accommodates language structures which are slightly higher than our present language ability level. Krashen is aware of the important role of social interactions in the development of thinking in students; he argues that the acquisition of language comes from input. He believes that the best sources of input are from the language teachers who can make the input understandable and interesting. Based upon his theories, we can deduce that Krashen takes social interaction seriously and assigns it a very crucial role in his process of language acquisition. Krashen felt that social interaction assists students to become communicatively proficient in the target language and assists them to polish their ideas and refine their thoughts. Krashen

also felt that the interactions among students can provide the raw material needed for their future language development. Other second language educators also expressed their belief about the role of social interaction in the process of second language learning. Many of them believe that social interactions are critical for successful second language learning. Rigg and Huddelson (1986) developed four principles of second language development in their studies. Two of the four principles as seen by Freeman and Freeman (1992) are related to the concept of social interaction. They are:

> 1. People develop their second language when they feel good about themselves and about their relationships with those around them in the second language setting;
> 2. Language develops when the language learner focuses on accomplishing something together with others rather than focusing on the language itself. So group activities...are ideal.
> (Rigg and Huddelson, 1986, p. 117)

In almost exactly the same fashion, Rigg and Allen (1989) write, "Learning a language means learning to do the things you want to do with people who speak that language" (Rigg and Allen, 1989, p. viii). They intensely stress the significance of interacting with target language users to learn language. All these educators believe that people to whom the language learners are connecting will constitute an important variable in the context which is essential for their language development.

7.5. "It was not my fault!"

It was not my fault!

Dear teacher,

I want to tell what had happen while we were playing on the football field. Jeff and I were at different teams. His team has 9 people,

> but my team only has 8 people. While we were playing on the field, his people always has two people to fight one of us. About 20 minutes after the game starts, while I was kicking the ball and trying to pass it to James, Jeff and his teammate Derrick ran towards me. While they were following me, Jeff suddenly grabbed my arms to put me to a halt, Derrick immediately ran to the ball and kicked it to his team mates. I got very angry. I believe Jeff cannot grab me. So I turned back and kicked him on his leg. After this happened, Derrick immediately ran over to help Jeff fight me. This is how the fight started. I did not provoke it, it is Jeff who start this. It was not my fault.
>
> Thanks!
>
> Mike
> (Mike, 06/05/1995, translated from Chinese language)

During the physical education class, Gao let his students play football in the sports field. A small fight happened among the students. Gao was not happy with what happened. He called together the students involved and asked them to write a letter to him to describe and explain what had happened. The above was one of the letters from the students. From the Chinese version of the writing, I can see very clearly that Mike still had not fully mastered the Chinese language and all the conventions in Chinese writing, however, he did understand how to make the argument more effective and convincing. Gao told me that he had found that his students could produce very convincing arguments when they write to get themselves out of trouble. He said,

> Take Mike for example, usually his Chinese compositions are not so good. He cannot convey his meaning to his readers very well. And there are many Chinese language problems in his writing. But when he was asked to write such kind of writing, he can do very well. There are a lot of other examples like this one. I have found that when my students write or complete assignments they perceive as meeting a real and immediate need, the quality of their work is superior to what they typically produce just to

> meet my requirement. I feel it is very necessary that we should pay attention to the focus of our class. We not only need to focus on the students' experience, we also need to focus on the things which are meaningful and authentic to them. We should help our students to use the target language naturally to fulfill real purpose in their world. (Gao, 06/05/1995)

During the period of my observation in Gao's classroom, I also found that Gao asked his students to label things in the classroom in the Chinese language, to take messages and also used other authentic language learning tasks, and used a form of student government to elicit what was significant in his students' lives. He also asked his students to read what they themselves and others in the classroom had written, he used familiar printed materials, and he used familiar popular Chinese songs. Gao believes that by doing these kinds of activities the students will gradually employ the Chinese language to express ideas in all areas of the school curriculum.

7.5.1. Discussion and analysis: Language tasks in the second language class should have meaning and purpose for students

It is very obvious that in the natural learning situations, we seem to learn those things that are meaningful to us. We tend to learn whatever helps us to solve our problems. What this means is that the learners are the ones who decide what to learn. An examination of all the second language classes in most of the schools, shows that people reversed this learning process. Gao said,

> While I was teaching in China, I often used the old traditional methods, such as Grammar translation. In this kind of class, the things that the teacher taught are selected by the teacher or the teacher's supervisors, and those things may not be meaningful to the students. And I found those things do not help students to learn. (Gao, 06/05/1995)

Many second language teachers and researchers seem to share Gao's concerns too. Freeman and Freeman (1992) observe that in the traditional second language classes the content is the target language. They point out that students are asked to focus on the language itself rather than on using language to solve their problems. The message conveyed in this type of class is that they need to learn the grammar and vocabulary first, and then they will be able to use the target language automatically in the later stages. Like Gao's ideas, Freeman and Freeman also suggest that this reversed type of learning will not make learning easy. Smith (1983) says that people do not learn when they do not understand the content. In most of the traditional second language classes, the focus was on grammar and vocabulary, and most students did not understand what was being taught. The condition for not learning is present in such classrooms.

Gao also indicated that the language used by the teacher in the second language classroom must be real. Gao said that real learning comes only when the students are learning real language. This point is called an "authentic" situation by Edelsky (1989). In the traditional second language class, the introduction of the target language was carefully sequenced from the segmented vocabulary grammatical items to higher level grammatical skills. This sequential system, as Freeman and Freeman (1992, 1993) point out, almost ensures a downfall because command of advanced structures depends on control of simpler structures, and the class moves on no matter whether all students have learned a specific item or not. Endeavors in the traditional second language class to restrain language input, as observed, will make language use and learning spurious. Students may be able to find the slight differences of two similar Chinese characters and choose different characters to fill the blanks in the standardized language tests, but they will never master the language form that will cater to expectations in the real world outside the classroom. The language used outside of the second language classroom is not restrained or controlled in the manner illustrated in the textbook exercises. It is used as the major

means to communicate with people. The people who use the language in the real world do not speak it in perfectly grammatically correct ways. Goodman (1988) explains that there is a tension between invention and convention as we learn a language. In the process of trying to make meaning, we ignore language rules and invent and create language.

Gao believes that second language learners need to be offered lots of opportunities in school to use the target language in authentic ways that are interesting and meaningful to them and that encourage them to interact with others. Gao suggests the following ways to maximize the authenticity of language learning in the classroom:

1) help students to read real books,
2) go on field trips,
3) have students working together to investigate topics of mutual interests,
4) play games and sing songs, and
5) organize pen-pal letters.

7.6. Writing essays and sharing them with fellow students

I have observed that Gao tried many ways in the class to assist students to develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing simultaneously. One way he tried was to have the students write essays about their own experience and then share them in the class. From my observation, I found that the students standing in front and sharing their own work has become so normal a routine that tremors have vanished from their hands and voices. Most of the students read calmly, clearly, presenting their own ideas in the Chinese language without using nervous fingers to shield their mouths, which was usually done by my students in China. Sue seemed pleased to be in the front of the classroom. She read,

> Once my father and I were invited by his friend Jack, who was a doctor in a hospital, to a Chinese restaurant. Being hospitable, Jack

ordered some Chinese dishes. Looking at the delicious dishes, I began to have my appetite, so I took my chopsticks and began to eat.

"Please help yourself." Jack pointed at a plate of pork liver and said, "This pork liver is quite fresh."

I picked up one piece and chewed it with great relish.

Before I swallowed it, he continued, "Pork liver is easy to get a disease just like human beings. For example, hepatomegaly, cirrhosis and cancer. Some porks carry those germs so you must examine them carefully before you cook them."

I did not want to touch that pork liver again, so I began to eat pork gut.

"Do you know pork gut?" he asked. "Since it contains a lot of dirty waste materials, it must be cleaned carefully before cooking. Otherwise ..."

Before he finished his speaking, my stomach revolted, so I stopped eating.

"Excuse me," I said, and quickly ran to the toilet room and vomited.

Since then, I dare not have dinner with doctors.

(Sue, 09/10/1995, translate from Chinese tape)

Everyone in the classroom laughed. Some applauded. "Right to the point. Nice use of details and dialogues!" Gao commented, "Any questions for Sue?" "Would you marry a doctor?" Linda asked mischievously. Sue shook her bangs in a vigorous negative.

Gao does not believe that students must develop an oral language knowledge foundation before they learn to read and write, nor does he believe that the students must develop a written language knowledge foundation before learning to communicate orally with others. Gao perceived that both written and oral language can build simultaneously. He tried different methods to cultivate reading and writing activities in his classroom because he holds the belief that reading and writing are most significant in second

language learning and it is crucial to develop both oral and written language proficiency for all students.

7.6.1. Discussion and analysis: In learning a second language, oral and written language are acquired simultaneously

A review of literature (Burnaby and Sun, 1989; Cheng, 1988) indicates that in the field of second language education in China, written language and grammar have been stressed over oral language skills for the students. It (Freeman and Freeman, 1992; Freeman and Freeman, 1993) also indicates that in some other countries, oral language has been stressed over written language. A whole language perspective of learning will not agree with the above mentioned types of teaching and learning. The whole language perspective not only requires students to be involved in listening, speaking, reading, and writing as they learn, but even goes further to point out that all the senses of our bodies are also of great importance in the process of learning (Gardner, 1984, and Harste and Mikulecky, 1984).

In North America, many second language teachers, with traditional education thoughts, use methods of teaching a second language that emphasize ability in the oral language before the start of learning to read and write. The traditional methods (Audiolingual method) which were founded on the wisdom from structural linguists that "Language is speech, not writing" (Diller, 1978) even proclaim the supremacy of speech in their title. Some recently published resource materials for second language teaching also divide the sections of listening, speaking, reading, and writing to guarantee that students learn the oral form of the target language before they undertake reading and writing, even if they have great literacy abilities in their native language. Many publishers also produce different and unattached books and materials for each of the four language

skill areas. Many second language programs, especially at the postsecondary level, offer separate courses for each of the four language skill areas. Students may attend a listening class followed by a speaking or reading class. On actual teaching practice, many people have noticed that teachers frequently overlook these differentiations, but if the course is entitled "reading" or "speaking", that is what gets stressed. Just as in the commercial publications, the four language skill areas have generally been handled separately in the professional teacher training materials at teachers colleges and universities. For example, Chastain (1976), in his text *Developing Second Language Skills: Theory to Practice*, uses separate chapters on listening comprehension, reading, speaking, and writing. Valette (1977) did the same in her text on language testing.

Krashen (1985) and Hudelson (1984, 1989) in their research and writing indicate that reading, writing, listening, and speaking are all equally powerful in the process of students' second language acquisition and propose that the four modes should not be treated as separate parts but should be integrated. Hudelson points out that children who speak little or no English can read print in the environment and can write English and use it for various purposes. He believes that functional reading and writing as well as speaking and listening are integral parts of all second language classroom activities because all of these skills or processes interact with one another. Harste, Woodward, and Burke (1984) say that each time when we read, write, speak, or listen is a language encounter with other people. The linguistic data (or experience) that we acquire from this encounter feeds into a common "data pool" in our mental cognition. In our subsequent encounters with language, we can draw linguistic data from this "data pool" to assist us to function in the language encounter. Instead of surmising that speaking, listening, reading, and writing are separate and independent, they propose that all four modes of language "support growth and development in literacy" (Harste, Woodward, and Burke, 1984, p.

53). This data pool idea is also being reflected in the California State Department of Education's *English Language Arts Framework*. In this document, it is stated:

> As the human mind seeks unity among the parts for a wholeness of understanding, so do the English language arts require integrating all the elements of language before students can make sense of the processes of thinking, listening, speaking, reading and writing. In-depth learning of any kind presumes various levels of effort and involvement of all the human senses and faculties. (California State Department of Education, 1987, p. 6)

The California State Department of Education holds that an effective language program should "emphasize the integration of listening, speaking, reading and writing" whereas an ineffective language program will "focus on only one of the language arts at a time, such as reading without purposeful writing, discussing, and listening" (California State Department of Education, 1987, p. 3).

7.7. How I learned English affects my Chinese language teaching

During our conversations on his Chinese language teaching pedagogy, Gao always led me into his previous second language learning experiences. He told me a lot of stories about English language learning experiences while he was studying English in China and in Canada. He observed that the learner's self consciousness or self awareness was very important in the process of second language acquisition. He specifically mentioned how he came to master the pronunciation in English language and used it as an instance to explore his theoretical stand. He said now he could discover and isolate the small differences between his own English pronunciation and those of native speakers. He could often do this in natural conversations, watching TV, or overhearing people chattering on the bus. But, he also added, that he could not do this several years ago. He

admitted that that was a long and hard process. He referred me to one of his writings. It said,

> For example, first I caught the sound /l/ in "help" which I had not pronounced correctly before. It immediately caught my attention. I soon realized that I had the same problem with other words containing this sound /l/, such as in "hotel", "level", "problem" etc. After it was brought to my attention, I started an conscious effort to improve. I tried to correct my pronunciation and automated the new learned sound in my speaking. At the beginning, the new learned knowledge as a monitor often came to my mind after I had already produced the sound in natural conversations. But gradually, I was able to think about it just at the moment I was going to say it. After a period of time, I could produce it correctly without thinking, this is automatically. (For the sake of preserving anonymity, information on the source of the passage is not provided)

Gao believed that adequate and comprehensible input was a very important condition to the acquisition of language. However, Gao also pointed out that without the learners' minds actively attacking the target, the language input might not be able to become effective intake. An effective language learner, as Gao pointed out, seemed to be in the process of conscious effort all of the time in attempting to improve his or her language. He said in his writing,

> When I started learning English, I paid very much attention to pronunciation and intonation. However, we did not have any native speakers to talk to and there were not any English programs in radio or on TV at that time in China. The only thing available to me was a few albums of English texts produced by Lingophone company of England. At the time, I treated learning pronunciation as learning singing. I played the albums hundreds of times. Mostly, I imitated one sentence after another, paying attention to every tiny detail, such as the rising and falling tones of each syllable. After I was completely confident that I could produce exactly the same as the speaker in the records did, I read loudly the same text again and again, to reinforce the memory and skills of pronouncing.

Now after so many years, I can still read the same text in the same way. However, the limit of my English language input stopped the further development of my pronunciation. For quite a long period of time, I was not aware of the serious problems existing in my pronunciation. I thought if I had more vocabulary, I would speak perfect English. After I had more and more chances to get in touch with native speakers, I gradually realized some of the problems existing in my pronunciation. However, it was only after I came to Canada that I suddenly was surprised by the great discrepancy between my English and most Canadians. I just could not believe that people could immediately recognize me as a non-native speaker on the phone, even after I simply said a "Hello". I told a friend that I wanted to get rid of my accent completely. When he said that I was too ambitious, I did not know that he really meant that. It was only after long time of struggle, that I came to know how serious he was. Though I still have a strong will to improve and I am still ambitious, now I know that unless I have not any other life commitments, the effort to sound like a native speaker is a mission impossible.

I also found it interesting that people often have difficulty recognizing the typical accents that commonly occur within their own mother tongue language group. Since I came to Canada, I gradually learned to tell the differences between French-English, Spanish-English, Russian-English, Cantonese-English, etc., however, I could not recognize what was the special common characteristics of Chinese-English. In a telephone conversation, I often recognized the person on the other end of the line was from Bong, Poland, or Eastern India. However, I often failed to detect by accent that the person speaking to me was a Mainland Chinese. I heard some Chinese commented on the strong accents of East Indians, Filipinos, etc., but not the Chinese. Some of them concluded that most of the Chinese in Canada had had formal English training before in China, which emphasized pronunciation very much. They believed that is why most mainland Chinese had no special accents.

I thought this was right at the beginning. Now, with more exposure to English language, I came to know that there is a blind spot that prevents me from recognizing my own accent. I think it is important for the learners to find these blind spots and become conscious of the areas in

> which they need to improve. (For the sake of preserving anonymity, information on the source of the passage is not provided)

Gao agrees with many second language educators and researchers that language input plays a very important role in language acquisition. However, his own language learning experiences convinced him that consciousness or awareness, including the awareness of rules and regulations can help a great deal in acquiring a new language. He emphasized the role of the active mind as being very important in second language learning. In his view, the active conscious mind of the learner should be used in the process of second language learning to examine target language input and the learner's own language output. In learning English language grammar, he found similar cases in his stories. He said in his writing,

> At first, I made grammatical errors frequently in spoken English for a long period of time, during which the conscious attempt of using them correctly was always in vain. I knew most of the grammatical rules, such as English tenses, the distinction between he and she, the third person singular form. Though I knew the rules well, I often could not use them correctly in speaking. I found it was impossible for me to keep these rules in focused attention when I was engaged in conversation. This went on until one day I suddenly found that I was able to keep attention on the problem though I still could not use the form correctly. I realized I overused past tense, i.e. using past tense for other tenses. Through an endless conscious attempt, gradually I found I could use this tense correctly most of the time. What is strange is that I never could keep two grammatical items in mind at the same time. Attention could only be given to one. After I automated the correct form, the next item came to my consciousness and was kept there until it was acquired. There seems to be a "readiness" in gaining a new consciousness. But consciousness did function effectively in this process. On the other hand, the lack of this consciousness may result in fossilization of these errors. (For the sake of preserving anonymity, information on the source of the passage is not provided)

Gao told me that he had tried many different ways to help his students to develop a conscious awareness of the Chinese language and learning skills. During the period of observation, I found that Gao used direct instruction, indirect instruction, personal stories, and inviting guest speakers in order to cultivate and promote conscious learning in his students. He indicated that in most of his activities, he tried: 1) to cultivate the growth of awareness in his students so that they were sensitized to their own strengths and weaknesses in the Chinese language, as well as to a wide range of resources and learning techniques, 2) to assist each individual student to establish personal priorities determined on the basis of individual strengths, weaknesses, and different needs in the Chinese language, and 3) to help them to action by selecting and using the most appropriate means to work on their established priorities. Another technique that Gao used with his students in promoting conscious awareness was a method which Gao called "Input enhancement". In this method, Gao would observe his students very carefully while they were using the Chinese language. He collected some of the common errors in their speaking and writing. He would not correct them in any instances. Instead, during the occasions when he used those structures or grammatical items, he would speak slowly and emphatically, in the expectation that this would lead his students' attention to those points.

7.7.1. Discussion and analysis: Consciousness (or awareness) has an important role in the acquisition of a second language

Krashen (1982) elaborates a second language acquisition theory, in which he advocates subconscious learning, and argues against conscious learning. He distinguishes the terms of "acquisition" and "learning". The former, Krashen believes, is a process which is similar to the way that children develop the ability in their first language It is implicit, informal and natural learning (Krashen, 1982). It is picking-up a

language without consciously knowing the language rules. "Learning", on the other hand, refers to "conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them." (Krashen, 1982, p. 10). He claims that "acquisition initiates our utterances in a second language and is responsible for our fluency. Learning has only one function, and that is as a Monitor, or Editor" which according to him "plays a limited role in second language performance" (Krashen, 1982, p. 16). Krashen argues that "if acquisition is central and learning more peripheral, then the goal of our pedagogy should be to encourage acquisition" (Krashen, 1982, p. 20).

In this theory, the key to acquisition is to receive the maximum amount of comprehensible input in natural language settings. Krashen downplays the role of output in acquisition. He notes that "we acquire spoken fluency not by practicing talking (and grammatical drills in the target language) but by understanding input, through listening and reading" (Krashen, 1982, p. 60).

However, Gao's second language learning experience and many other people's stories of learning a new language tell us that consciousness, including the awareness of rules and regulations can help. It seems that Krashen only sees one side of the coin and ignores other very important aspects in second language learning. There have been numerous studies about the role of consciousness in learning a second language. Many have challenged Krashen's language acquisition theory. Schmidt (1990) conducted a longitudinal study of a 35-year old ESL learner for six years, during which time the participant acquired the English language in an English speaking community. English language learning for this research participant was a typical subconscious acquisition as described by Krashen. However, the findings of this research tell a very different story from that of Krashen's. Schmidt's research indicates that the participant achieved a relatively high level of fluency, but his utterances in English language were very poorly

organized. There was almost no improvement in the participant's language structure during the six year period of observation.

Other research studies suggest that some learners can acquire a second language successfully through natural acquisition or interaction with the target language without any formal instruction. After some investigations, Schmidt (1990, 1992) labeled these people as "self-studiers". Schmidt discovered that in the process of learning a new language, these people were using some conscious learning strategies, such as asking questions to native speakers of the target language, consulting available sources, and actively using deductive and inductive reasoning to look for rules and exceptions. It seems that in the process of learning a new language, the learner should take initiative, be motivated and be consciously involved in the acquisition process. Knowles said,

> ...there is convincing evidence that people who take the initiative in learning, learn more things, and learn better than do people who sit at the feet of teachers, passively waiting to be taught... They enter into learning more purposefully and with greater motivation. They also tend to retain and make use of what they learned better and longer than do the other learners. (Knowles, 1975, p. 14)

Learning, as pointed out by Wu (1993), is a process in which the learner organizes the outer world within his or her inner world. No matter how the outer world is structured, it makes sense to the learner only when it is reorganized in his or her own way. Learning, under this cognitive framework, is not simply a matter of accumulating some existing body of knowledge, such as the lexical, syntactical, and semantic knowledge of a language, but is a process of finding out how a new structure can be connected to the existing system in the learner's mind. When a new structure is established, a new consciousness is built. Learning is not an accumulation of existing knowledge, it is a process of building new consciousness.

7.8. "You can use English language in my Chinese class."

Before I entered the classroom, one of the students told me that they were going to have a class on Greek history and geography and it would be in the Chinese language. I was a little surprised to see Gao had brought in some books in English to the classroom. This was a Chinese language class. Why did Gao bring in books written in the English language? Noting my puzzled face, Gao explained,

> I believe what we learn in our first language will stay in our head. And we can express it in both our first and second languages. For my students, though they are ethnic Chinese, and some of their parents speak Cantonese, Mandarin, or other Chinese dialects at home, since they grew up in Canada, the main tool that they use to communicate with is English. I know them very well, most of the time out of my class they will use English. The reason that I bring these English language books in is to let them learn the content in English, and then I will ask them to express it in Chinese. Some times, when I asked my students to write a Chinese essay, and they cannot do it well in Chinese, and then usually I will ask them to write in English first and then redo it in Chinese. Put all the ideas in the Chinese language. (Gao, 06/25/1995)

Gao was also asked if it would be better to teach students' in their first language (English language) before they start second language learning. Gao seemed to believe that if we want to build on the students' strengths, it would be very important to consider the language the students have been using for communication and for learning about the world before they came to school. He said that many second language students have been writing in their first language and have begun to build many concepts and notions about print before starting school. He added, "It is important to base instruction on this previous experience and capitalize on the strengths of these students".

7.8.1. Discussion and analysis: Learning can take place in the first language to build concepts and facilitate the acquisition of the second language

Recent research shows that the knowledge of literacy transfers from the first language of the learner to his or her second language. Psycholinguistic research using miscue analysis with readers of languages other than their first language has shown that the reading and writing process are the same regardless of the language used (Barrera, 1983; Goodman, Goodman, and Flores, 1979; and Hudelson, 1981-82, 1987). Analysis of miscues in reading research (Barrera, 1983; Goodman, Goodman, and Flores, 1979; and Hudelson, 1981-82, 1987) shows that readers from different languages all use cues from the graphophonic, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic cueing systems to construct meaning while reading. Recent research (Ovando and Collier, 1985) also indicates that even when the surface features of two languages are different, readers apply visual, linguistic, and cognitive strategies that they use in first language reading to reading in a second language.

Swain, Lapkin, Rowen, and Hart (1990) report that there are many other reasons for learning basic language skills in one's first language. They report on an interesting study that compared bilingual students who had learned to read in their first language with other bilinguals who had learned to read in their second languages. When both groups of students studied a third language in school, the bilinguals who had developed literacy in their first language learned to read the third language faster than the other bilinguals who had learned to read only in their second languages. Swain, Lapkin, Rowen, and Hart (1990) suggest in their research that there may be cognitive benefits involved in developing the first language as fully as possible.

Research (Cummins, 1989; Cummins, and Swain, 1986) also suggests that the cognitive content knowledge that students acquired in their first language can transfer into their second languages. Cummins (1989) has argued that concepts are most readily developed in the first language and, once developed, are accessible through the second language. In other words, what we learn in one language can transfer into a new language we are learning. Cummins compares the languages that bilingual speakers speak with two tips of a large iceberg. What is below the surface, contains all the concepts developed in both of the two languages. The languages that the bilingual speakers acquired are channels that allow bilinguals to intake or output different cognitive concepts.

7.9. Understanding Chinese culture

In the classroom, Gao was telling a story about the ancient Chinese scholar Confucius. Gao told the students that once, when Confucius was small, he and two of his elder brothers were going to eat pears. There were three pears left at home. The sizes of the three pears were very different. One was large, one was small, the other was medium sized. Young Confucius came to the table and took the smallest one and left the bigger ones for his elder brothers. After Gao told his students this story, he asked them to explain why Confucius took the small one rather than the bigger ones. One of his students replied, "The small one is just enough for him, the bigger ones were too much and he could not eat them all at once." Gao laughed and explained, "In the Chinese culture, elders are symbols of wisdom and experience and are widely respected and honored. Confucius chose the smaller one because he wants to show respect for his elder brothers."

After explaining this story, Gao went on to tell some other stories about Confucius and the impact of his thoughts on the traditional Chinese thinking and culture.

After class, Gao told me that he had observed many cultural differences between the Chinese and the Canadian culture. He observed that some Chinese words and phrases were interpreted very differently in China than in Canada. He used the phrase "Ni Ke Pang Le!" (You have put on weight!) to illustrate this. He said this phrase in China indicated that someone was getting rich and was leading a better life, but in Canada, it might be interpreted as someone being lazy and having no self-control. He also pointed out that the ways of speaking, in some cases, the differences between the Chinese and the Canadian cultures are very different. He referred me to his writing. In his writing, he writes,

> In Chinese tradition, people never take a compliment. When somebody says to me: "You speak good English!", I would always respond very spontaneously by saying: "No. My English is very bad." I was reminded by several friends that this kind of answer does not sound polite to people, and I was told that "Thank you!" would be a better answer. I tried, but it is very difficult to do so. Whenever I say "Thank you!", I always feel guilty. I feel I am too self-conceited to accept others' compliments. Mostly, I found I just kept quiet or gave a "Thank you!" in a very low and uncertain voice. (For the sake of preserving anonymity, information on the source of the passage is not provided)

Awareness of those subtle differences, as Gao pointed out, was very important for successful cross-cultural communication. When Gao was asked how to teach culture and what to teach in a culture learning class, he referred me to the following story in one of his writings.

> Once I worked in a university office which offered cultural orientations for the new coming Chinese students. Most of the Chinese students were sponsored by CIDA. They came to Edmonton for two months training in cultural adjustment and life preparation first, and then went to different cities for one or two years of learning in their professions. Being a Chinese myself, with certain cultural experience

already, I was hired as one of the instructors for helping those newcomers, explaining to them Canadian customs, way of life, etc.

When I started working in the center, I was told that cultural orientation program was not a very easy job. It could be very sensitive sometimes, and if things were not handled well, cultural conflicts could happen. In their previous years of work, there had been lots of good experiences, but there had also been bad experiences. I had not anticipated that a few weeks training program could be that complicated. I thought, perhaps, I could work as a bridge to fill in some gaps of cultural misunderstanding.

I taught with Canadian teachers in the class. Before very long I realized how different I saw the purpose of this orientation course from some of my colleagues. I knew it would take years and years for a newcomer to learn and understand the Canadian culture and life. I had been here for five years, but I still believed that I had just got to know a very small fraction of this world. I thought the purpose of that course was to raise the students' consciousness in seeing, appreciating and understanding Canadian way of life. The major goal of the program should have been to help the students to build up positive attitudes, and make them more open minded to see and learn different aspects of life in Canada.

However, some of my colleagues seemed to believe that they should teach everything they might need in their future life in Canada. They also showed the belief that when the students left our center, they should all be "mistakes" free in Canadian society. Some life skills they taught were very useful, such as how to shop in Safeway, how to make telephone calls, etc. A few of others created uncomfortable feelings, such as how to wash toilets, keep yourself clean, etc.

Once I was talking about the North Americans' informality to the students in class. I explained that many people choose not to be as formal as most of us Chinese did. In the University, students were very relaxed in class. They sometimes drink or eat. They dress very informally too. Sometimes you can see students, even professors put their feet on the table. Such events, I believed, were good to tell the Chinese newcomer students, so as to make them understand the relationship of people here.

> Particularly, I wanted to stress the non-authoritarian image of the professors in Canadian universities, which I thought was a good example of a democratic society. However, my Canadian colleague felt I had done something terrible wrong. She immediately corrected me that these examples were not the typical Canadian way. Rather, they were bad habits and did not happen often.
>
> This "good" or "bad" version of Canadian culture popped up several times. Gradually, I feel that some people in that program saw the purpose of the cultural orientation as a correction center. They wanted to correct all the "bad" things of the trainees and make them "good" in Canadian culture before they went to other Canadian cities. (For the sake of preserving anonymity, information on the source of the passage is not provided)

Gao suggested that the purpose of teaching culture in a second language classroom was to raise the learners' consciousness in seeing, appreciating, and understanding the target language people's way of life. It is expected, as Gao indicated, to help the learners to build a positive attitude, and make them more open minded to see and learn different aspects of reality in the target language people's life.

7.9.1. Discussion and analysis: Assisting students to understand target language culture in the second language classroom

Gao seems to suggest that target language learning without learning the target language culture is not a successful program. He suggested that he was using a comparative study of the Chinese and the Canadian culture in his classroom.

The importance of learning about the culture has been recognized by many researchers in the second language research field. Damen believes that "language learning implies and embraces cultural learning" (Damen, 1987, p. 4). She states,

> While cultural guidance is seldom part of the stated curriculum of the ESL, EFL, or any language classroom, it is nonetheless often a part of the hidden agenda, a pervasive but unrecognized dimension, coloring expectations, perceptions, reactions, teaching and learning strategies, and is, more often than not, a contributing factor in the success or failure of second or foreign language learning and acquisition. (Damen, 1987, p. 4)

Damen (1987) stressed that the second language program should include cultural learning and that the awareness of intercultural communication skills has to be part of the curriculum.

A review of the literature shows that there is great significance in including culture in the second or foreign language curriculum: 1) Culture study will help to build and maintain the learner's motivation to learn the target language (Grittner, 1983). 2) Words become meaningless symbols unless they are learned in association with their proper cultural referents, cultural values, and attitudes (Grittner, 1983). Thus, an understanding of culture will help the learner to conduct meaningful communication and lead to a more complete comprehension. 3) As a general educational program, learners should gain an understanding of the nature of the target culture itself (Chastain, 1976). 4) The learners' ethnocentrism will be reduced through cultural learning. Having become equipped with appropriate cultural knowledge, the learners would develop a higher degree of sensitivity to and tolerance for cultural differences. 5) Through contrastive culture study, the learners can acquire a fuller understanding of themselves and their own cultural background, thus enriching their lives and contributing to an awareness of the universality of human experience (Baxer, 1983).

The use of language is always culture bound. But not all languages in this world have a language-culture relationship in a one-to-one manner. In other words, it is not true that there is only one culture for one language. Chinese language is a perfect example of

this. Behind the Chinese language, there is embedded Hongkong's culture, Singapore's culture, Mainland Chinese culture, Taiwain's culture, etc. The Chinese language is not bound to any specific culture or political system.

7.10. Strategies that Gao used to implement his pedagogical principles

During the period of observation, I uncovered many strategies Gao used to implement in his pedagogical principles. These are outlined below.

Student peer group conversations: Gao often groups his students in pairs and small groups to work on reading and writing assignments as well as for projects in other content areas. I observed that as the students work collaboratively, they naturally converse with their classmates no matter whether they were instructed to talk or not. It was also observed that when the students worked in pairs or in groups, they used almost all of the functions of language; functions such as to gratify needs, to restrain the social behavior of others, to establish and retain social relationships, to express personal opinions, to describe imagination and creativity, to solicit information and to find out about things, and to convey information in their conversations.

Class discussions: Gao often uses issues such as social security, federal, provincial and municipal politics, and current events as topics of discussions in the class. Instead of using a single source for information, he uses textbooks, informal books, newspapers, and television news reports as the sources of information. These discussions not only enhance students' language abilities, but also challenge students to think and to re-examine their values and beliefs.

Student daily oral news report: Every morning Gao would invite one of his students to present a report on the weather and the important events of the day in the class

and in the school. Sometimes their reports touched on other news topics in the city and in the country. The purpose of the oral news report, as I see it, is to use the language for real communicative purposes, such as to inform others.

Student research topic presentation: Gao's students were sometimes asked to prepare and give oral reports about topics they were studying in social studies, health, and other content areas. It is believed that oral reports help students learn about the topics in specific content areas as well as to develop their oral language abilities.

Bookmaking: Making and binding students' writing into books is one of the ways to share students' works. Students design their own title pages and draw their illustrations.

Newspaper publishing: In Gao's class, the student government publishes a newspaper. Students can submit their stories, poems, big events in the class and the school to the student editor.

Using computer in the class: Gao often took Chinese language programmed computers into the class. Students who have good typing skills can input text more quickly than they can write by hand. Students can use the computers to type articles, edit writings, and learn new Chinese vocabulary.

Journal writing: Gao also asked his students to keep a journal in the Chinese language. Every two weeks or so, he asks the students to hand them in and he helps them to edit the format.

The above are only some of examples of the strategies that Gao used in his classroom. All the above mentioned language teaching and learning methodologies are regarded as following the principles of whole language, and have been classified by many

researchers and teachers (Heald-Taylor,1987; Pappas, Kiefer, and Levstik, 1995) as whole language methods and activities.

7.10.1. Discussion and analysis of data: Strategic uses of different teaching strategies in whole language expand the potential for student empowerment

We are all aware that our teaching strategies are neither designed nor implemented in a vacuum. The design, the selection, and the application of a particular teaching strategy, method, or approach emanates from our perceptions about learning, the learners, and the teacher's role. As Bartolome (1994) points out, it is exceptionally important, when deliberating on issues of second language education, that educators deal frankly with their own deeply rooted conceptions of learning.

Numerous new teaching strategies, methods, and approaches which were supposed to facilitate students' learning were found to be ineffective in some teachers' classes. Many traditional strategies, after a little innovative change, were found to facilitate students' learning in whole language classrooms. It can be seen that the effectiveness of a strategy is not inherent to the strategy itself but rather in the informed manner in which the teacher implements it. During the period of my observation, Gao put to use some old and some new strategies, such as cooperative learning, language experience, diction, process writing, etc. to give birth to an effective learning environment for the students. In his innovative utilization of these strategies, students in his class ceased to be treated as objects, but rather were viewed with respect and were regarded as active and capable participants in the process of their own learning.

Jones, Palincsar, Ogle, and Carr (1987) believe that learning is linking new information to the old knowledge that the learner acquired previously. They point out that

our knowledge is stored in our memory in the form of knowledge frameworks. The new information which we encounter is understood and stored by calling up the appropriate knowledge framework in our minds and integrating the new information. According to this view, acknowledging and utilizing existing student language and knowledge in learning makes sense. Innovatively employing the different teaching strategies to create a learning environment which incorporates student language experience and the learning experience in which teacher and students mutually participate are the prime aims of whole language. The process of incorporating students' experience in learning, as they point out, constitutes a humanizing experience for students who traditionally were dehumanized and disempowered in the schools. It also, as they later indicate, overcomes the deeply rooted traditional concept of learning, that the educator is the one who knows and transfers the existing knowledge to the learners.

It has been observed that successful use of different teaching strategies comes from the abilities of the teacher, namely, the teacher's ability in his content areas, and the ability to be consciously aware of his or her concepts of learning, learners and the role of the teacher.

7.11. It is not easy to be critical!

Today, it was Susan's turn to do the daily morning presentation in Chinese language. From my observations on other students' presentations, I found the topics included in the presentation ranging from local weather to current world events.

Susan started with a small report about the weather. Then, she went on to tell a piece of news reported yesterday on the local television about three young teenagers who robbed a cab driver and killed the driver and then ran over an elder lady. Susan was

passionate and condemned the three lawless young men. The students in the class all responded with anger and some of them said these three young men tarnished the reputation of younger people in town.

After Susan finished her morning presentation, Gao went up to the front. Gao first praised Susan's fluent Chinese, and then went back to the horrible crime report. Gao asked the students whether they had heard other reports and read the newspaper about the crime. One student waved his hand and caught everyone's attention. This student indicated that he heard another report about this news and told the class that the report said that this crime is the result of the loose and unrestricted young offenders' law in Canada. Gao then asked the class, "Is that true? Do you think that they were really motivated by the loose crime law?" After a few second's silence, Tom, a student in Gao's class, said that there were many factors which may have been instrumental in leading to this crime. He pointed to crime on television, the poverty situation in some of the inner city families, and many other factors.

Gao nodded and then went on to ask how to prevent this type of crime from happening again and asked if having stricter laws in Canada is the answer for a better and secure society? After these two questions were posed, the students began to talk to each other and suggest that the stricter law would not completely eliminate these crimes. They suggested that the government should also do some other things, such as provide a basic living for the welfare receivers, eliminate the crimes on television, set up employment programs, and bring back confidence in its citizens.

Later, Gao planned to have his students discuss the municipal election issues. In the class, Gao specifically pointed out that one city councilor candidate was an active environmentalist. He then told the students that this candidate would not get support from the city business groups as most of the businessmen were "pro-development" rather than

pro "sustainable development". Finally, he led a discussion amongst his students on the issues related with job creation, development, and environmental protection. The discussions were heated and the students were engaged.

The above are some of observations that I made in Gao's class.

7.11.1. Foster critical thinking and social awareness in students

During my interview, Gao referred me to his stories in his writing. In the writing, he writes,

> The gap between rich and poor did not bother me very much before I really saw it and experienced it myself. I used to believe that equal payment and guaranteed permanent jobs caused the inefficiency in China. The Chinese scientists do not work hard because they do not get paid better than the janitors. Professors have no incentives of doing research or teaching as the office secretaries may be assigned better houses. After economic reform in China, more and more people believe that only the capitalist market system can make people work and the country rich. Competition for money is the fuel of the social engine.
>
> I thought about this issue for quite a long time when I was in China. Competition and material incentives seemed to be very effective in stimulating production and speed up economic growth. This had been proved by the economic reform after the cultural revolution. However, competition also creates a world of "fittest survive". In an undeveloped country like China with such a large population, free competition could possibly lead to thousands and thousands of people losing their "iron rice bowls" and fall into the ditch of extremely poor living condition, even facing starvation. This is a very hard choice. However, if we do not let some people get rich first, the whole nation would be in this endless suffering of slow motion, inefficiency and invitality. And everybody is in poverty.

Industrialized countries had gone through an age of savage competition when their capitalist economy started. Charles Dickens and lots of other authors vividly depicted that miserable world. China never really tasted capitalism since it went from feudalism directly into communism. Perhaps, we had to make up that lesson and start from the beginning. If there were no other better choices, we had to sacrifice some people who would be the losers of the competition in exchange for the prosperity of the whole society. This was my conclusion of the law of economic development. I thought I was rational. But my new experience challenges me.

Once I argued with a Canadian friend who has a very strong passion for social justice and human equality. He insisted that the government should take responsibility of helping the poor and decrease the gap between the rich and the poor. Using the examples in China, I tried to prove that the gap between the poor and the rich is necessary in order to keep people from being lazy. As we are very intimate friends, I ventured some words which I did not want to say. I claimed that some people have to be poor to keep the dynamics of the economic development.

We were washing dishes after dinner and he had a towel at hand for drying. What I said made him furious. He threw the towel at my face. I knew he might not be that angry at me. But it was hard for him to accept the gloomy "reality" I prescribed. I thought I was rational to think that way. However some personal encounters made me more reasonable.

Once my wife's old bridge on her teeth suddenly broke. A sharp piece left there stuck out and hurt her mouth. I took her to a nearby dental clinic. There was nothing complicated. It did not even take the dentist one second to click the remaining denture out. I thought I could do that myself with a screw driver. But I worried my tools were not clean for that job. We were asked if we had insurance or not and of course we did not. At their mercy, we were charged less, i.e., twenty dollars for that one second work.

I did not feel angry at being exploited. I knew dentists were supposed to be paid in that way because they had many years' of training. I just felt sympathetic to my wife. She worked almost a whole day to get

that twenty dollars. Was that second of the dentist work really worth that much in exchange for my wife's whole day?

Now it sounds quite true to me when I heard a Chinese student who had experienced the hard work as cheap labor in Canada said, "I got to know now that all what the Communist Party told me about capitalism is lies, except one thing, exploitation." (For the sake of preserving anonymity, information on the source of the passage is not provided)

After finishing this story, he referred me to another story in his writing, he writes,

Once I visited an exhibition displayed by environmentalists in Edmonton. The display used very strong evidences to show the environmental crisis we are facing, and I was quite impressed. However, what surprised me and made me think was the part of solutions the exhibition promoted. It called on people to drive less and use bicycles and buses and to limit the production and use of refrigerators and air-conditioners. What immediately came to my mind at that time was that those people felt bored living in the comfortable modern life, and wanted to try something different. If they had experienced the hardships of life in under-developed countries, they would not have thought about getting rid of these great achievements of science and technology so easily.

The display also showed a series of environmentally friendly products, such as washable diapers which can be used again and again, long lasting grocery bags made of cloth instead of plastics, rechargeable drinking bottles, soaps without chemicals, etc. Ironically, those products looked exactly the same as what have been used in China for years, and what Chinese are trying to replace.

For seven years in China before I came, I rode a bicycle for half an hour to get home after work every day, some times soaked in rains or frozen in ice and snow. At that time, my dream was to have a motorcycle. A car was too far beyond the reach of ordinary Chinese. I also know what it was like to wash diapers several times a days. When some chemical products were first introduced to China, such as detergents, glass cleaners and kitchen liquid soaps, I felt that they made life so much easier for us. We heard that in the developed countries, people throw away plastic dishes

after each meal, discard their pens when finishing writing, and even buy a new camera for each role of film. What great wonder modern science can bring about to life!

When I first came to Canada, it was not easy for me to understand and appreciate the efforts of Canadian environmentalists. This is such a large country with so few people and little industry, the environment is much better than that in China. It is crazy to spend so much for environment protection and even at the cost of economic development and job opportunities. This is what I heard very often from the Chinese Community, especially from those who are in business professions.

What taught me was the dedication of so many Canadian environmentalists and the publicity of environmental issues in the heated debates for governmental and industrial decisions. The daily life in Canada also convinces me that we are facing an environmental crisis.

The first day I went to the University, I was given a big pile of printed paper to read: University catalogue, International Student Center's handbook, housing in Edmonton, registration information, courses descriptions, etc. When I got to the place where I lived, I found a pile of advertisements in the mailbox. The next morning, I saw the newspaper in Canada was so thick, whereas in China they were usually two pages each day.

I immediately understood what people meant when they told me that the western world was a world of information. However, I found I was almost buried by the coming information every day. I hardly had any time to read them before they became garbage. This made me feel shame. Paper and printing were very expensive in China, where they were first invented. Even the students did not have the opportunity to read what they should read because of the cost.

Not only did I understand that this is a world of information, but also this is a world of materials. I was surprised to see that people threw away big things such as mattresses, televisions, bikes, desks, carpets, and even cars. Many of them were still good to use. In China, things are used for much longer time. They are fixed again and again. I can hardly recall any furniture we threw away for years living in China. However, after a few months, I found I had to do the same. The television I bought from a

garage sale was broken, and I bought another one. What to do with the old one? I know it could be fixed, but I would not save much more money to fix it than to buy a new one. I wanted to give it to television repair shops, but they were not interested in it. I had to dump it in the garbage can.

There is so much garbage every day. Whenever I throw some out, I feel a sense of big relief. I know many of them are made of plastics, glass, alumina, etc. They will exist and occupy a space on our very limited living space of the earth for hundreds or even thousands of years! While we are dumping and dumping, the manufacturers are trying to produce more as fast as possible. The aggressive salesmen knock at every door to push for sales. And we, as consumers, keep buying and buying. Every one has to live in this way, because our economy is bound to this deteriorating cycle. If we stop, the whole society breaks down.

...

While Chinese are pursuing the higher living standards like those of Canadians', many Canadians are considering moving back to the way similar to Chinese life. If so, should Chinese be more careful and learn the lessons of the industrialized countries before we move ahead? I used to be so confident that our human society is in the process of progress as science and technology being the most important indicators. Now I realize that the world and our life are more complicated than I thought. The future of human beings is not predetermined in the ever rising civilization as my past Marxist education told me. If we are not careful enough, our ignorance and simple-mindedness someday will lead us to the irremediable mistakes and even the disasters which lead to the destruction of all our life on this planet. (For the sake of preserving anonymity, information on the source of the passage is not provided)

Gao's past life experiences in China and his cross-cultural experiences in Canada have made him realize the complexity of life and society. These have challenged his previous assumptions and beliefs, such as social consciousness and environmental consciousness, and have led him to a brand-new view of life and society. In this process, his previous social, environmental, cultural and political consciousness has been

reaffirmed. His new experience helped him to see that there are no objective laws and absolute truths in the human social world. He began to hold the view that everything could be seen from different perspectives and people with different views and ways of life should be understood, accepted, appreciated, and respected. At the same time, Gao also realized that there are some values and beliefs which are fundamental for a stable and healthy society and he believes it is very important that people examine them and think about them. Gao firmly believes that he has no right to impose his ideas about social and political realities upon other people, especially his students. But, he believes that he is responsible to lead his students to examine these values and beliefs and give his students the opportunities to rethink and reconstruct their values and beliefs.

I observed that in the two anecdotes at the beginning of this section, Gao functioned as a facilitator. Gao raised the social and environmental issues, and constructed a safe and secure environment for the students to reflect and to examine their own beliefs and reconstruct their new value and belief systems. Gao believes that critical thinking is a very important thinking tool that students can employ to deconstruct their previous conceptions of social reality and reconstruct brand-new personal values and beliefs. Critical thinking, as seen by the researcher, seems to Gao as a process by which our assumptions, beliefs, and perspectives are examined, disassembled, transformed, and reassembled. Critical thinking is a cognitive re-engineering process.

Gao's vision and effort to promote social, cultural, political, and environmental awareness in his students lead me to the concept of caring in Noddings' *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*. In the book, Noddings (1984) suggests seven theoretical concepts which are particular to caring. One of her seven concepts is the construction of a moral ideal. Noddings believes that teachers and schools should expose students to a world of possibilities and help them to achieve in that world,

and she also firmly believes that the nurturance of a moral ideal should be the prime aim of education. In order to achieve this prime aim of education, Noddings infers three pedagogical principles from her concept of caring. These principles are dialogue, practice and confirmation.

Purpel (1989) also mentioned the method of moral education in schools. He writes,

> As educators, ..., our responsibilities are not to promulgate visions but to inquire into them, not just to study them but to be critical and discerning of them. ... Hence, we cannot in good educational conscience avoid the serious and volatile disputes on religious and moral matters because they are controversial, complex, and outrageously perplexing. Quite the contrary: because they are so important and since they beg for awareness, understanding, clarification, and insight, they are central to significant educational inquiry. (Purpel, 1989, p. 68)

There is always a danger that teachers will impose their own beliefs and values upon students in moral education. The idea of employing critical thinking and allowing the students to question and finally formulate their beliefs and values not only exemplifies democratic education but also the empowerment of students.

7.12. Summary

In this chapter, I presented data and offered an analysis of the data to provide some insights towards the research questions which were set out at the inception of this study. The discussions and analyses revealed the beliefs that the participating teacher held and the reasons for the learning environments he created. Besides the descriptive data, some interview data were also presented to explore and analyze the participant's teaching philosophy.

CHAPTER EIGHT: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

> No matter what the degree of objectivity attained, no matter how universally acknowledged are the rules, the final decision is up to the individual. (Greene, 1973, p. 253)

8.1. Summary of the study

The review of literature shows that little research has been done on whole language in second language classrooms. This study had the purpose of investigating the teaching of Mandarin as a second language in a classroom with a teacher (referred to as the participant) recently immigrated from China who used whole language principles normally reserved for teaching language arts in a regular English language environment and aimed to draw new insights to second language education from the findings of the study.

I observed in the participant's classroom for a period of over two months. The lengthy period of observation enabled me to provide a thick description of the Chinese teacher's second language classroom. The participant and his students were interviewed to gain an understanding of their previous experience, the school, the participant's teaching, and his pedagogical philosophy. The interviews were all conducted within the framework of the research questions.

Tape recordings of the interview data were completely transcribed by me. The research data were read and reread many times by me to detect recurring themes.

The conclusion of the research was the result of collaborative construction and interaction between the research participant and I. The three graduate students' comments and the thesis supervisor's insights are also reflected in the final construction and presentation of the research findings.

8.2. Conclusion

The following conclusions are a result of the analysis of the data and its relevance to the research literature concerning second language education and whole language. Specifically, I tried to draw conclusions about the importance of using whole language in second language education. Reflections upon the results of the study have led me to propose some implications for second language education.

8.2.1. What principles of whole language were used by the teacher?

An analysis of the field notes made during classroom observations and the notes made during interviews has shown that the following whole language principles were used. During the research, it was found that some of the whole language principles were used more often than others and also that some of the principles were implemented more successfully than others. In the following presentation, some bias might occur as I try to unfold the value of whole language principles in second language education.

8.2.1.1. Learning takes place when the learner is actively interacting with other people, with books, and with other objects and materials in context. Meaning is constructed by the learners themselves, not imposed by others.

Whole language, as Weaver (1990) observes, recognizes that social interaction among students, such as discussing, sharing ideas, working cooperatively in undertaking research projects or solving problems, enhances students' learning and promotes students' cognitive development. Whole language also stresses the active participation of the learners in the process of learning and teaching. It holds the belief that learning should engage students in language, thinking and the construction of meaning and concepts. It rejects the traditional of view of learning in which students are asked to be passively accepting rather than be actively participating.

In Gao's class, it has been observed that he utilized various methods to invite his students to participate in the dynamic process of constructing knowledge. Cooperative project tasks, cross grade tutoring, and other student-centered and social interaction oriented activities permit his students to discuss, to share ideas, and promote mutual understanding and interpersonal communication skills. He regarded the students as capable knowledge constructors in the process of second language learning. Gao valued his students' experience and used it as a source of information in the class. Unlike other second language classes, Gao's class offers the students real opportunities to use the target language to communicate for authentic purposes.

In language learning, the roles of the learners have been viewed differently by different educators. Lindfors (1982) suggests different images for language learners that reflect how the learner and learning have been viewed. The "plant" image, for example, suggests that learners are passive and receive nourishment from outside sources but do nothing for themselves. The "hunter/gatherer" image, on the other hand, sees learners as active as they gather bits and pieces of language through drills and practice. However, children are then expected to put the bits and pieces together in "real life" situations that are very different from the classroom. In the "builder" image children actually "do" things

with language as they actively construct meanings. While this image is a good one, it ignores the importance of interaction. Children must not only "act on materials" but also "interact with them". Lindfors believes that the best image is of language learners being flexible "explorers" who interact with their environment, their peers, and their teachers as they learn about the world and life. Children actively "learn how to mean" in meaningful, functional social interaction in a learner-centered environment.

Traditional beliefs (Horwitz, 1985, Horwitz, 1988, Lightbown and Spada, 1993, McLaughlin, 1992, and Freeman and Freeman, 1992) in second language education hold that when second language learners are allowed to interact freely (for example, in group or pair activities) in their imperfect target language, they will learn each others' mistakes. But this assumption is completely unfounded. Other research (Lightbown and Spada, 1993) has shown that second language learners do not produce any more errors in their speech when talking to learners at similar levels of target language proficiency than they do when speaking to learners at more advanced levels or to native speakers. Research (Lightbown and Spada, 1993) has also shown that second language learners can provide each other with corrective feedback on target language speech production in group work interaction if this is carefully planned and learners are made aware of the need for accuracy practice within the context of their communicative group work.

8.2.1.2. Significant and enduring learning is learning that the learners perceived as functional and purposeful.

Whole language teachers believe that students learn the things which they perceive as being functional and purposeful. Significant and lasting learning in students can happen only when it interests them, meets their needs, and furthers their present purposes.

It has been observed many times in Gao's class that he employed activities which have real purpose and practical meaning in his students' lives. Once, several students were involved in a small fight. Gao, as a teacher, while attempting to solve this problem, asked each student to write a narrative report in the Chinese language to describe what had happened. The students involved all completed an essay describing what happened and argued their innocence. This activity, as observed by me, is a successful application of a whole language principle in his teaching. At another time, he requested his students to produce a monthly newsletter in the Chinese language announcing upcoming events and activities in the class and in the school. All these functional and purposeful activities that Gao utilized in his class engaged his students in the process of learning the Chinese language.

It has been observed by many second language teachers and researchers (Horwitz, 1988, Lightbown and Spada, 1993, McLaughlin, 1992, and Freeman and Freeman, 1992) that in the traditional second language classes the content is the target language rather than an application of the target language to meet the students' need, to solve problems in their lives.

8.2.1.3. Environment for learning must be learner-sensitive, learner-friendly, and make the learners feel confident about themselves.

Whole language teachers believe that the environment in which the students learn and grow is of great importance. They believe students will be more able to engage themselves in the learning process wholeheartedly and able to dare to take risks if they are in a learner-sensitive and learner-friendly environment.

The participating teacher of this study was fully aware that creating a learning environment would help his students in the process of language learning. He has been very careful in his attitudes and speech towards his students. The students regarded him as a caring and kind teacher. They were willing to expose themselves to him for guidance and advice. It was observed many times in the class that students made mistakes in their speech and essays, but the participating teacher did not use them as points of target to criticize and to correct the students, but rather accepted them and regarded these mistakes as part of the process of language learning. This encouraged his students to use the Chinese language boldly in and out of the class.

The topic of the safe learning environment in second language education has never been fully discussed and addressed, but most of us understand, it is a very important one. The traditional belief (Horwitz, 1985, Horwitz, 1988, Lightbown and Spada, 1993, McLaughlin, 1992, and Freeman and Freeman, 1992) holds that learners' errors in the target language should be corrected as soon as they are made in order to prevent the formation of bad habits. A special term was even invented for this unjustified belief. It is called "language fossilization". Of course, it is very hard for a language teacher with such a view of language learning to create a learning environment in which the students will feel safe and dare to risk in the target language.

Research based on observations of the interaction between children and adults shows that adults tend to focus on meaning rather than form. It has also been observed that adults may correct an incorrect word or an incorrect statement of the facts, but errors which do not interfere with successful communication are rarely corrected. The findings of this research indicate that errors in language learning should be regarded as a part of the process of language learning, and the best result of language learning comes from a focus on meaning and communication rather than on linguistic forms. Errors, as the research

participant indicates, are a natural part of our second language learning process. This is true of the development of a child's first language as well as of second language learning by children and adults (Lightbown and Spada, 1993).

Creating a safe learning environment, as many whole language teachers will agree, does not mean all language errors in the process of learning will be ignored. Those errors reveal the patterns of learners' developing interlanguage systems, showing where they have overgeneralized a second language rule or where they have inappropriately transferred a first language rule to the second language. When those types of errors are persistent, especially when they are shared by almost all students in a class, as shown in the research, it maybe useful to bring the problem to the learners' attention.

8.2.1.4. Though there are common cognitive developmental patterns among learners, the nature and course of each individual learner's learning and cognitive development are still different.

Whole language teachers do not believe that the concept of uniformed learning among learners, which assumes that all learners learn the same thing at the same time or speed, will work properly. They believe that each individual learner learns and develops with his or her own unique speed in the process of learning.

In Gao's class, I have observed that he assigned students to different learning tasks. It was also observed that Gao gave whole class instruction, but he also did a lot of individual tutoring while the students were working on their different projects. It has been discovered through interviews that Gao realized that different students might have different needs and he was endeavoring to accommodate all kinds of different needs from the students.

In the traditional second language classroom, the concept of uniform learning prevails at all levels of learning (Horwitz, 1988, Lightbown and Spada, 1993, McLaughlin, 1992, and Freeman and Freeman, 1992). Different students' unique needs and interests were ignored. The direct results of this kind of teaching is that some of the students may meet a lot of knowledge in the class that they had learned before, or some students are not able to learn the things that they need most urgently in their process of learning.

8.2.1.5. Social collaboration among students is the best facilitator of learning.

Whole language teachers believe that individual learning is promoted through social collaboration. In other words, learning is facilitated by and within a community of learners. Whole language teachers do not encourage competition among students. They encourage students to work together, to share ideas, and to experience success together. They regard social collaboration amongst the students as the best facilitator of learning.

In Gao's classroom, I observed that Gao used different types of group work to promote social collaboration amongst his students. He used group research projects, group presentations, organization of different political parties, the establishment of a newspaper editing board, organized Chinese dancing club, and had many other different collaborative student activity groups. All of these partnership activities, as observed by me, promoted social collaboration amongst students, maximized students' opportunities to interact with each other, and facilitated his students' learning of the Chinese language.

In the field of second language education, we are all aware that when we are learning a language, we are expected to acquire the ability to communicate in that language. Many methods and approaches have been developed to assist the second

language learners reach this ultimate goal. I have described and discussed some of them in **CHAPTER TWO**. Widdowson (1978) studied these methods and approaches carefully and he observed that on the surface level, all of them may appear to be different, but on the root level, they are the same. Most of these methods and approaches, as pointed out by Widdowson (1978) are based upon one basic assumption, that people learn to communicate in the target language by first learning the target language forms. The authentic use of the target language to interact with the people using the language is considered to be secondary. Widdowson (1978) indicated that he disagreed with such a position, and pointed out that the order of learning should be reversed. He concluded that the authentic use of the target language should be the focus of any second language class. Larsen-Freeman (1986) also realized the need for second language learners to use the target language for authentic communication purposes. He wrote,

> since communication is a process, it is insufficient for students to simply have knowledge of target language forms, meanings, and functions. Students must be able to apply this knowledge in negotiating meaning. It is through the interaction between speaker and listener (or reader and writer) that meaning becomes clear. The listener gives the speaker feedback as to whether or not he understands what the speaker has said. In this way, the speaker can revise what he has said and try to communicate his intended meaning again, if necessary. (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p. 123)

Communication among the learners, especially amongst second language students in the target language, requires a lot collaboration from both sides. I am aware that it is very difficult for a teacher to design authentic collaborative communication activities in the target language within the classroom context and conduct it within the limited class time period. But, I discovered that though it is difficult, it can still be done. In Gao's class, students collaborated on many group research projects, did collaborative presentations,

and engaged in many other pair or group Chinese language learning activities in and out of the classroom.

8.2.1.6. The curriculum should consist of opportunities to engage students in various kinds of authentic and natural reading, writing, discussion, experimentation and research that learners voluntarily do in and outside of school, rather than an emphasis on the mastery of minimal skills and factual information.

Whole language teachers believe that we should engage our students in the authentic literacy and learning experience, and curriculum should focus on real life experience rather than on the made-up classroom drills and exercises, and lecturing.

In his class, Gao employed different ways to bring real life experience into the classroom context and engage students in meaningful, authentic, and purposeful language learning activities. He organized newspaper projects, daily presentations and journal writing activities for his students as well as taught social studies, and health in the Chinese language. All these learning activities provided his students with authentic opportunities to learn and grow in the Chinese language.

In the field of second language research, Widdowson (1978) argued that second language teaching and learning should not only emphasize the form of the language, but the authentic use of the target language.

8.2.1.7. The curriculum is decided by and negotiated among the teachers and students.

Gao utilized student government in his class to make decision on some big issues related to classroom organization, content, and style of instruction. This "mass line" approach, which means decisions made according to the people's will, is a major characteristic of Gao's teaching. He believes this empowers students and enables him to locate the students interests which he can later use to assist him to decide how to build a sound Chinese language curriculum.

In the traditional second language class, the curriculum was determined by the linguists, teachers, or so-called experts (Lightbown and Spada, 1993; McLaughlin, 1992). Students have no input into the process of decision making. Whether the students are interested in the subject or have learned it previously, they have to follow the teacher and his or her decisions of what to learn and how to learn. In whole language, a collaborative construction of curriculum can help the teacher to be aware of what the students need, and then he or she can use the class time effectively to address the issues and problems which the students identify as important.

8.2.1.8. Language learning should be functional and purposeful for the learner, and language should be kept natural and whole rather than be fragmented into parts in the process of language acquisition.

Whole language teachers believe that the language the students are learning should be kept natural and whole in the classroom. They promote the idea that language learning should start from an emphasis on the whole rather than on its constituent parts.

Gao's pedagogy clearly exemplified this principle in action in a second language classroom. He provided lots of opportunities for the students in his classroom to use the target language meaningfully and purposefully. His students were asked to read real

Chinese language reading materials in full context. They were given the opportunities to use the target language to explore social studies and health issues. They were also given opportunities to play games and sing songs in the Chinese language. I also observed that he put a lot more emphasis on the whole rather than on the parts of the Chinese language. It should be pointed out that an emphasis on the whole, for Gao, does not mean to give up the parts. He also did explicit instruction on the grammatical items, and structures in the context of whole and in the context of the students' needs.

In the field of second language education, it is widely accepted that language teaching should go like this: the teacher presents grammatical rules one at a time, learners practice examples of each one before going on to another, and the teacher should teach simple language structures before complex ones. Language embedded in context, as Cummins (1989) points out, is less cognitively demanding than context-reduced or no context language. Cummins (1989) believes that second language students need context-rich language so that they can understand the instruction.

8.2.1.9. Explicit direct and indirect teaching concerning the parts of language occur in the context of the whole, and in the context of the students' needs.

After the whole language movement came into being, there were many misconceptions about whole language. Weaver (1990) summarized some of these misconceptions. Two of them were: 1) whole language teachers do not do any direct teaching, and 2) whole language teachers do not teach grammar or vocabulary. Whole language teachers do explicit teaching in their class and they also teach grammar and other grammatical and vocabulary items. But the manner that they conduct this type of teaching and such content area knowledge is very different from that of a traditional style teacher. Their explicit teaching on the linguistic aspects of the target language does not always

follow a predetermined sequence found in traditional style teaching. This explicit teaching on grammar will occur in a whole language class as a response to the learners' interests and needs, to their actions and comments, and to the teacher's observations. The parts or individual skills of the language, in the whole language class, are taught in the context of the whole and in the context of students' needs. Whole language teachers believe that the need for the part knowledge of language can be identified in the tasks the learner is trying to complete.

It has been observed that Gao also used some traditional methods to assist students to learn the grammatical and vocabulary items. It has also been observed that Gao did this type of traditional whole class explicit instruction on grammar after he discovered that many of his students shared a common problem on a particular grammatical item. He indicated that his focus was always on the whole, on communicating through reading and writing as well as speaking and listening, and in that process he believed that the students were able to develop the parts, the sounds, and skills. He also emphasized that focusing on the whole did not necessarily mean forgetting all of the studies on the separate parts. In the students' process of moving from the whole to the parts, he also helped the students carefully study the parts.

8.2.1.10. The teachers serve as role models to demonstrate what it means to be literate persons and lifelong learners.

The role of the teachers in whole language instruction is not limited in to teaching and facilitating learning in their students. Teachers are also responsible to demonstrate to their students that they themselves are good learners.

Gao did an excellent job of demonstrating to his students how to learn and what it means to be a passionate learner and a good speaker of the Chinese language.

8.2.1.11. Teachers are facilitators. They are responsible for structuring a supportive and caring community of learners.

Whole language teachers believe that teachers are the persons who should be responsible for creating a safe, caring and supportive community of learners in the schools. They do not like the traditional power structure between the teacher and students and the competition amongst the students in and out of the classroom. Whole language teachers believe in a supportive community of learning; learners will feel free to explore without fearing negative consequences and learning will happen naturally.

From the interviews, I learned that Gao felt that the environment in which the students were learning was crucial for their language development. A supportive environment in which the students were encouraged to learn and to grow makes a big difference in the student's life. Gao believed that he was responsible for making such an environment in his classroom. From my observation, Gao did a good job of creating a supportive community of learners in his class by connecting the school to the Chinese communities in the city as he sought to establish supportive Chinese communication opportunities for his students.

8.2.1.12. Teachers should treat students as capable and developing, not as incapable or deficient. Teachers should also collaborate and share responsibility for curricular decision-making with their students.

In the whole language class, students are seen as capable and developing. Teachers respond positively to what their students can do and cannot do. They encourage students' risk-taking and individual thinking. Teachers also collaborate and share responsibility for curricular decision-making with their students.

In Gao's class, students were given the opportunities to take ownership of their learning and growth. Gao encouraged his students to establish student self-government in his class. Through this student government, students' ideas and thoughts about their learning and their interests were identified. With the help from his students, Gao incorporated students' suggestions into the curriculum.

In second language education, people tend to accept the principle that learning should be teacher centered, rather than student centered (Horwitz, 1985, Horwitz, 1988, Lightbown and Spada, 1993, McLaughlin, 1992, and Freeman and Freeman, 1992). This assumption basically promotes the idea that adults should choose what it is that children need to learn. Of course what adults choose to teach will be influenced by their view of the learners. From this study, I see that the second language classroom can be structured through a negotiation between the students and the teacher. This research also suggests that learning can start with what the learners know, and therefore learning activities can be built upon learners' interests.

8.2.1.13. Evaluation is accomplished through numerous assessments of various types. And it is happening all the time in the process of learning and teaching.

Whole language teachers believe that the evaluation of students should not be based upon a single test. They believe that tests such as the standardized tests are not capable of evaluating learners' authentic academic abilities. Recorded observations,

periodic performance samples (of writing or reading, for example), records, inventories and questionnaires, dialogue journals and learning logs, and student generated records are used as methods to evaluate students in whole language. All these methods are conducted by the teacher all the time while the students are engaged in the process of learning. Most commonly, the products of whole language assessment methods, gathered over a long period of time, are put into a folder, box, or other type of container and called a "portfolio". Because of this, the whole language method of assessment is often being called as a "portfolio assessment".

In Gao's class, I observed that observation and other nontraditional assessment methods to evaluate students' Chinese language performance were used. The assessment activities were intertwined with learning and teaching, and they were periodic. The results of the assessment were used to modify the curriculum and his teaching.

In the field of second language education, the standardized, government-mandated tests are still very popular. Take ESL for example, the most frequently used and credited tests are TOEFL, GRE, or Michigan Test. In whole language, these types of assessment for language development are considered as inadequate, inappropriate, and even invalid.

8.2.1.14 Students and teacher self-evaluation is also considered to be a significant constituent of assessment and evaluation. Assessment is essentially learner-referenced.

In whole language portfolio assessment, self-evaluation is practiced by the students and teachers. In whole language, assessment is not norm-referenced or criterion-referenced, but learner-referenced. The learner-referenced assessment means the learner's present accomplishments are compared with his or her past accomplishments. The result

of the assessment is not used for competition with fellow students, but is used as a reference to trace the student's growth and development.

From the interviews and the observations, I discovered the Gao did not use the results of evaluation to compare one student with another. He used it to compare the student's present achievements with his or her past achievements. Gao also invited the student to participate in the assessment process. He believed that the student's self assessment was also an important part of assessment. He did not treat assessment as a means to uncover the students' shortcoming or deficient points, but to use them to identify the students' strengths and their patterns of language development.

8.2.1.15. Other language principles used by the research participant.

Besides the aforementioned whole language principles, it has also been discovered in this research that the research participant, Gao, held other language principles as well in his teaching, such as 1) foster critical thinking in the students and 2) foster social consciousness in the students.

The research participant seemed to feel that whole language presents teachers with a good teaching model, but it still had its own problems. He mentioned that one of its problems is that it sees the nature of teaching and learning, the essence of knowledge, and other social realities in an apolitical manner. He seemed to agree with Edelsky (1991) and Vibert and Kelly (1995) in the opinion that it is naive to think of pedagogical philosophy this way in an unequal and unjust society. Church, Portelli, MacInnis, Vibert and Kelly (1995) suggest that researchers and educators should move beyond the current superficial arguments about whole language versus skills-based models to the discussions about the politics of literacy education in an unequal and unjust world. In this research, it was

discovered that the participant realized this limitation of whole language. He felt that it is not only important that we should think of ways of working within the whole language, but it is also crucial that we should think of ways to go beyond whole language to a more broad social constructive perspective.

The findings of this research, as well as some of works by Paulo Freire, Peter McLaren, and Henry A. Giroux, suggest ways of putting second language teaching and learning in a much broader social and political spectrum.

After my observation was completed, I conversed with the research participant. It was revealed that while the participant tried to implement his pedagogy in his classroom, he also had some unsuccessful classroom stories. For example, he still thought about how to share power with students in the classroom.

8.2.2. How does the Chinese teacher use the whole language principles in the course of helping children learn Mandarin?

It has been found that the participant strategically used different teaching strategies in his classroom. Teaching strategies are neither designed nor implemented in a vacuum. The design, the selection, and the use of a particular teaching approach and strategy arises from the teacher's perceptions about learning, the learners, and the teacher's role.

It has also been found that the participating teacher is fully aware of what he believes and he could discuss candidly his conception of learning. He has a set of principles to follow and to adhere to, and tries to implement them in all of his teaching activities.

During the period of observation, Gao used old and new strategies, such as cooperative learning, language experience, diction, process writing, etc. to create an effective learning environment for the students. In his innovative uses of those strategies, students in his class ceased to be treated as objects, but rather were viewed with respect and regarded as active and capable participants in their own learning. It can be concluded that the participating teacher adheres to his principles and innovatively and strategically uses different methods to implement what he holds dear in his teaching.

8.2.3. What are the reasons for using whole language principles instead of traditional approaches which the teacher was accustomed to using in China?

The interviews on the investigations of the participating teacher's past teaching experience and his present pedagogical philosophy reveal that the teacher's current philosophy of second language instruction differs greatly from his philosophy as he learned English as a second language in China and how he taught English to Chinese students in China. The major reason for this change is Gao's new perspectives on the conception of life and learning. Almost eight years of cross-cultural experiences and study for two graduate degrees in Canada has given Gao a unique opportunity in his learning and personal growth to a new paradigm of thinking.

In this new paradigm, he no longer believes that there are objective laws and absolute truths in the world. He believes that everything can be seen from different perspectives and people with different views and ways of life should be understood, accepted, and respected. He has committed to use his own effort and his own unique way, to try to make this world better for everyone. As a teacher, he believes that his major responsibility is to bring about changes in schools to make second language learning an easier and happy experience for the young children.

8.3. Implications for teaching second language

Based on the findings of this research, as well as research in existing whole language classrooms, several implications are drawn for the teaching of second language. They include:

1) *Teachers can immerse their students in target language speech and print.* The participant in this study constantly stresses the importance of immersing his students in authentic language uses. He believes that it is crucial that the teacher create a rich language and literacy environment for his or her students. His view is shared by many other educational researchers. Raines is one of them. Raines (1995) states that a target language speech and print rich environment (or context) will be conducive to lead students to the target language literacy process. In a context-rich whole language classroom, the students will bustle with activity, pause for group reflection, and churn with energy as they work industriously on their goals of finding out about the physical and social world. Students will listen, speak, draw, perform, read, write, synthesize, infer, interpret, and apply information in the target language. In a target language speech and print rich classroom, as pointed out by Raines, students will become "constructors of language in its spoken and print form" (Raines, 1995, p. 10) and will be learning the processes of literacy and practicing what they have learned within the whole target language context.

2) *Lots of language opportunities and resources available in the target language might assist students to learn the language.* The findings of this research, as well as other research in whole language, suggests that a teacher might provide time, space, lots of target language activity opportunities, and target language resources to his or her students in a second language classroom. Time and space will allow students to conduct different

individual and group activities. Abundant opportunities and resources will allow students to choose from a variety of different activities at different levels. The individual differences in students should be recognized in their process of acquiring a second language. A second language classroom might be filled with interesting books, magazines, newspapers, and other materials in the target language.

3) *Meaningful communication can be the guiding principle in the second language class.* The research participant said many times that he found that when his students were asked to complete assignments which they perceived as meeting a real need, the quality of their work was superior to what they typically produced. Those types of work or assignments which can meet students' real needs or have meaning to students are called "authentic" by Edelsky (1989). In the second language classroom, there is a need for teachers to involve students in activities that are meaningful. In a meaningful communication environment, as many researchers have indicated, students (meaning makers) are willing to take the risks to use the target language in speech and written forms to express what they are learning or what they have learned.

4) *The target language culture can be integrated into the process of learning.* During the interviews, I discovered that the participant was very sensitive to cultural differences. He suggested that cultural learning should be part of language learning and indicated that the purpose of teaching culture in second language classrooms was to raise the learners' consciousness in seeing, appreciating, and understanding the target language people's way of life. A positive attitude towards the target language culture can help the students to be open minded as they see and learn different aspects of reality in the target language people's lives. The use of language is always culture bound. The importance of culture learning has been recognized by many researchers in the second language research field (Damen, 1987). While exploring the issue of how to help students learn the target

language culture, Lu (1995) suggested employing the following activities in the second language classrooms:

1) video-tape and/or film watching,
2) role-play and simulation,
3) solving cultural problems, and
4) native speakers' visits to the language class.

Other researchers may suggest different methods to assist students to acquire cultural knowledge, but as Lu (1995) and Wu (1993) point out, the best way of learning a target language culture is to personally experience the target culture, become immersed in the target language people's daily life and then reflect on it and compare that with the native culture of the students. The acquisition of a different culture will not only help students gain a better understanding of the target language, but also an understanding of their own culture.

5) *Students' first language can be employed to build concepts and facilitate the acquisition of the second language.* In my observation, I found that the participant teaches a second language very differently from those teachers who hold a communicative language teaching (CLT) approach to second language teaching. The CLT oriented teachers tend to use the target language in the class all the time. While on the contrary, the participant in this research sometimes used students' first language to facilitate students' learning of a second language because he believes that it is important to base instruction on students' previous experience and strengths. Researchers such as Freeman and Freeman (1993) also suggest the use of first language in the process of assisting students to learn a second language. The use of first language in acquiring a second language, as suggested by this research and many other research studies, makes second language learning much easier for our learners.

6) *Teacher as a model language learner for the students.* From my observations, I found that the participating teacher always served as a role model for students in language learning. Each time he requested his students to do reading or writing, he would read and write with his students. I found that he believes teachers should show their students that they (teachers) themselves are passionate readers and writers in the target language. The power of a role model is very strong.

8.4. Implications for assessment in second language education

It has also been found that the participant was not in favor of the traditional methods of language assessment. He pointed out that the traditional methods were all deficit oriented rather than development oriented. His criticism of assessment in the traditional method is shared by many other educational researchers (Weaver, 1990, 1994). Many educators recognize that the standardized, province or state mandated tests in second language assessment are not adequate and appropriate, or sometimes even invalid about the students' learning progress. The first language whole language assessment research indicates that many teachers developed a variety of means for assessing students' language learning. Some of the methods that first language whole language teachers used in their classroom, as summarized by Weaver (1990), include: 1) samples of students' reading and writing, 2) think-aloud protocols, 3) recorded observations, 4) conferences and interviews, 5) inventories and questionnaires, 6) dialogue journals and learning logs, and 7) student kept records. The combination of all these above methods, as believed by Weaver (1990, 1994), can give us better ideas of students' learning than the isolated skill tests. During my observations, I found the participant used all of those methods in his assessment of students. He also feels that assessment should be ongoing and should not be isolated from the learning context of the students. The findings of this research as well

as the literature review leads me to suggest that whole language assessment methods can be used in the field of second language education.

8.5. Implications for second language teacher education

During the class observation and interviews, I found that the research participant was always "deep in thought", that is, he was very reflective and was able to summarize perspectives from his own teaching and learning experiences and to apply them in his classroom. From his own learning experience both in China and Canada, he developed his own theories about language acquisition and learning. From his teaching experience in China and Canada, he developed his unique second language pedagogy. During my observations, I also found he tended to reflect on his teaching after each class. I found he always reflected on learning activities in the classroom, the language use in the classroom, the role of the teacher, the decision making process, and the structure of the lesson. He believes that reflection on teaching and learning in the classroom helps him formulate plans and develop materials for the next class. Other research (Bartlett, 1990; Richards and Lockhart, 1994) in education also recognized the importance of reflection in teaching and learning. Second language teachers are all aware that classroom visits and comments by supervisors and peer teachers are a good source of information about teaching. It has been pointed out by Richards and Lockhart (1994) that classroom teachers' reflection on their own teaching is also a great source of information to assist teachers to better understand their underlying pedagogical perspectives and improve their instructional practice.

In many second language teacher training programs at universities or colleges, the importance of teaching experiences and methodologies is emphasized. In actual teaching, as pointed out by Parker (1984), teachers developed routines and strategies for their daily

class activities. The classroom research (Parker, 1984) shows that teachers apply routines and strategies almost automatically and do not use any conscious thought or reflection. Experience and strategies, I believe, are important for second language teacher training and development. I also feel that in order to make experience and strategies play a productive role, it is very important for teachers to consciously think or reflect about them. The findings of this research, suggest the significance of integrating reflection into our second language teacher education programs.

8.6. Suggestions for further research

After a review of the data analysis and the conclusions, I have summarized the following implications for second language research from an educational researcher's perspective.

1) *Further research on the role of reflection in second language teacher education.* The participant in this study believes strongly in the role of reflection. Further research is suggested on role of reflection in second language teacher education.

2) *Further research on the application of whole language principles into the second language programs.* This research, as well as other studies, suggests that whole language principles can be used in second language education. Due to the differences in instructional contexts, the extent and subsequent success of whole language principles may vary. Further research on the use of whole language in second language classroom is recommended.

8.7. Teaching English in China revisited

In this section, I have attempted to answer the research questions set at the onset of the study and draw general implications for second language education as suggested by the findings of the research as it applies to teaching English to Chinese students in China.

Recent educational research on the teaching of the English language to Mainland Chinese students both in China and abroad has been focusing on the use of the CLT approach in Chinese schools and universities. A variety of responses and critiques have been produced on this topic. In this section, I will examine some of the research and offer an analysis of the use of CLT in the Chinese context.

As stated in **CHAPTER TWO** and **CHAPTER FOUR** of this dissertation, it can be seen that English language instruction in schools and universities in China is mainly through Grammar-translation and the combination of the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and Audiolingual Method (ALM), or a combination of the GTM and the ALM approaches. From my personal teaching and learning experience in China, it can be concluded that the above mentioned language teaching approaches have had bad effects on English language education in China. It can be observed that most of the students in the Chinese universities, especially the non-English majors students, had great difficulty with authentic oral and written English language.

My previous research (Wang, 1994) on Chinese students' learning English suggests that Chinese students whose focus of learning English has less emphasis on the linguistic aspects of the language would do better in solving day-to-day English language communication problems than those whose main focus is on the linguistic aspects of the language. The actual competence of the use of language does not just involve the competence to utter words or sentences in the target language but also involves the competence to react mentally, socially, and culturally as well as verbally in communication situations. The mental, social, and cultural reactions are the root of verbal

communication. Mere linguistic utterances do not make up communication. Keeping the language learners out of real communication situations and requiring them merely to produce a verbal reaction is like keeping a plant away from the soil while trying to get it to grow and blossom. Language learning methodology should seek to produce communicatively competent learners as opposed to purely linguistically competent language learners. According to Brown (1980), communicative competence enables us to convey, interpret and negotiate meanings socially within a specific cultural situation. The communicative language teaching (CLT) approach endeavors to enhance language learning by improving the communicative competence of the learners. The next question raised naturally is, since there are so many advantages for the communicative approach, can it be applied to English language teaching in China?

In order to answer the above question, we have to examine the characteristics of both the Chinese students and teachers, the present methodology in China, and the applicability of the communicative language teaching approach in the context of China.

The characteristics of the Chinese teachers as summarized by Maley (1984) are: 1) They care about their students. 2) They are conscientious in the lesson preparation. 3) They are constantly trying new ways to improve their teaching. 4) They are willing to work cooperatively with co-teachers in the lesson preparation. 5) They are strongly oriented towards accuracy teaching, with a heavy emphasis on grammar and vocabulary. 6) They want to control everything that happens in the classroom. 7) They are not sure about the accuracy of their use of the language they are teaching.

The current English language teaching practice as I mentioned earlier is mainly through the GTM, or the combination of GTM and ALM approaches. The characteristics of the current English language teaching practice in China, as summarized by Wang (1994), are: 1) There is a strong focus on the linguistic aspects of English language. 2)

Memorization of vocabulary and grammatical rules is emphasized at the expense of proper use of English language. 3) The quantity and the variety of the English language that the learners receive is limited. 4) Opportunities for real communication for learners in English language are very limited. 5) Teachers control the classroom, i.e., they do the majority of the talking in the classroom.

The CLT implies a learner-centered approach to curriculum design and teaching, which includes students' access to teachers or others with native-speaker competence in the target language and the availability of authentic learning materials. It focuses on the students' need for communication in the target language but of course this approach has its disadvantages also.

The disadvantages of Communicative Language Teaching approach, as I discussed in **CHAPTER TWO** and in Wang (1994) includes: 1) It makes higher demands upon the professional training and competence of the teachers. The teacher must be competent in the target language. The teacher must be energetic and adaptable in order to prepare and intervene the classroom activities. 2) It may perplex learners who are used to other approaches, at least, in the initial stages. 3) It is more difficult to evaluate students' progress than with other existing approaches. It is hard to assess students' mastery of the four competences. 4) It appears to be against the traditional practice therefore older teachers and learners may oppose its application.

There are a considerable number of research studies done on the application of CLT in teaching English language in schools and universities in China (Li, 1984; Wang, 1986; White, 1988; Anderson, 1993; Campell and Yong, 1993; Penner, 1995). In 1989, Burnaby and Sun (1989) conducted a survey of the Chinese English teachers' viewpoints on the CLT approach and the EFL teaching methods in China. They concluded that the CLT approach was beyond the expertise of the Chinese teachers. In addition, the class

size and schedules, resources, and equipment in the Chinese universities and schools, and the examination system made it difficult to completely implement the CLT approach successfully. The participant of this research and myself agree with this view point.

Realizing the deficiencies of the current English methodology in China, I (Wang, 1994) proposed a new model of English language teaching in China on the basis of his research, language acquisition theories proposed in the West, and his teaching and learning experience in China. The new model was named the "Triangulation Approach". The term "triangulation", is derived from a navigation and military strategy referring to the use of multiple reference points to locate a target object's exact position. I used this concept to refer to the combination of the GTM, the ALM and the CLT approach to English language learning and teaching for the purpose of better benefiting the language learning of the English language learners in China. This model tries to include the advantages of the three mentioned approaches and change them in a way which can be applied by the Chinese teachers and students in the context of China. The Triangulation approach has the following characteristics: 1) Linguistic competence is acquired through content area knowledge learning. This model starts from the belief that content area knowledge can provide real meaning for the language learners. Using content area knowledge, the teacher can provide a basis for a meaningful language learning context. The teachers should first modify the existing language textbooks published in China, and add content area knowledge such as history to the language textbooks, using the text to illustrate the grammatical usage of the English language. Secondly, the teachers should identify the essential vocabulary words in the text and put them into the glossary. Both the content area knowledge and the linguistic knowledge objectives should be clearly identified by the teacher, the objectives should be realistic and easily attained. This notion of teaching through content is developed from the beliefs of language teaching in the GTM and the CLT approaches. 2) The "i + 1" Comprehensible Input: The language of

instruction at the lower level in this approach is both Chinese and English. English should be spoken in simple words and structure and used sparingly. At the higher levels, the language of instruction should be English. Using the ALM idea of using sound labs, patterned drills should improve students' pronunciation in English language. Films and tapes by native English-speaking people should be played in the sound labs for higher level students. 3) Increase student-to-student communicative interactions: The CLT approach promotes real communication in the target language. Research suggests that the interactions among the learners can enhance language learning. At the higher level of language learning, the instructor should assign simple themes and ask the students to communicate in the English language.

We are all aware that issues related to language learning and teaching usually have more than one answer for each issue. Upon completion of this study, I revisited the Triangulation approach. Based upon the Triangulation approach and the findings of this research, I suggest the following for teaching the English language in China:

1) *A revolutionary reform in the area of English language assessment is needed.* The current practice of English language assessment in middle schools and universities in China mainly focuses on the grammatical aspects of the language and mainly ignores other aspects, such as speaking, and listening. The tools that the educational system in China uses to evaluate students' English language performance is mainly multiple choice type of questions. The results of those tests are used as indicators of students' language development and to judge teachers' effectiveness. The use of multiple choice, norm referenced and criterion referenced standardized tests on the grammatical aspects of the language have a profound impact on the English language education in China. This type of test narrows the English language curriculum, it forces the teachers and the students to believe that what is tested is the most important part of English language learning.

Measurement driven instruction has become the major norm of instruction in the English language class. The skills and abilities to use English language for authentic communication purposes are not emphasized to the extent that they deserve. The findings of this research as well as the literature reviewed suggests that English language teaching should encompass all aspects of the language. English language assessment, therefore, will also include speaking, listening, and the ability to use the language with ease in different contexts. It seems to me, that the assessment norm in English language education in China can be changed to accommodate all aspects of the language rather than just the written mode.

2) *Merge all available teaching methods for English language teaching in China.* I (Wang, 1994) propose the use of the triangulation approach in teaching English to Chinese students in China. In this approach, I propose that ALM, GTM and CLT should be used together when assisting Chinese students to learn English. This recommendation certainly has merit but different language learners may come with different learning needs. The responsibility of the teacher is to help him or her find a significant method to learn English in the context of using the English language as a authentic means to communicate with other people and therefore one needs to merge all the available methods which may ultimately lead to the consideration of applying some of the whole language principles discussed in this dissertation.

3) *Promote student centeredness in curriculum design and teaching.* The English language education curriculum in schools and universities in China is not student centered. The content and design of the English courses are not designed to meet students' needs. For example, the texts used in the English language programs are mostly selected, not based upon students' interests, but based upon the literary and political values of the texts. In most of the English language classrooms, the teachers are the centers of the teaching.

Teachers are responsible for giving lectures and supplying correct answers. I believe our education is a continuous reconstruction of living experiences in which the learners are at the center of the concern. I feel it is very important to eliminate traditional teacher and student relationships and promote a new attitude in which students' own effort to learn and discover through trial and error are valued. The findings of this research indicate that in order to learn a new language, the learners themselves may go through the process of language learning rather than following the language teachers' instructions or any particular language textbooks. The findings of this research also suggest that it is the teacher's job to create a conducive target language environment in which the students can learn. A more student centered approach in English language teaching and learning will release the Chinese students from a passive role and lead them to a more creative, more active and more rewarding process of learning.

4) *Cultivate and promote a way of critical thinking in the Chinese students.* Chinese students for centuries have been criticized by Western scholars (Ting, 1987; Holm, 1990) for their inability to initiate critical thinking in the process of problem solving and question analysis. Ting says that a lot of Chinese students who had their education in China were not taught to think for themselves and "are so used to blindly following the established rules and authorities that they, at their work, become like docile yesmen and yeswomen, incapable of independent, creative thinking" (Ting, 1988, p. 55). I understand the validity of this opinion is at question. But I do feel the traditional Chinese culture, the Chinese language, and the political power structures in current China will have an influence on the Chinese students' way of thinking. Many linguists (Sapir, 1929; Whorf, 1956) and philosophers (Humboldt, 1963) argue that learning a new language is to acquire a new way of life and a new way of thinking. I think they are right in this opinion. I believe that language and culture are closely connected. Successful second language learning will include the learning of the target language culture. One important

component of the western culture is the liberal idea of individualism. I do not appreciate the "my wants" or "me first" version of the concept of individualism, but I do strongly feel that the Chinese students need to develop a way of independent critical thinking which can balance the students' individual needs and the needs of others.

In summation, I have attempted to draw implications for teaching English as a foreign language in China from the Triangulation approach and the findings of this research in this section.

8.8. Researcher's reflections

The culmination of this study would be incomplete without mentioning the applicability of the methodology to this study. In an effort to explore the application of whole language in the second language classroom, I chose qualitative inquiry. The design of this study was both descriptive and interpretative in nature, with the intention of obtaining a rich, thick, and comprehensive understanding of the participating teacher's pedagogical philosophy and teaching practice.

In order to uncover the underlying pedagogical philosophy of the participating teacher, I am confident that the interview allowed this aim to be achieved. In using open-ended questions, more information was obtained for thorough description and interpretation as necessary.

Bogdan and Biklen said, 'The interview is best used to gather descriptive data in the subject's own words so that the researcher can develop insight on how subjects interpret some piece of the world" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982, p. 135). In this study, the data were gathered in a personalized manner. It was found at the end of the data collection that the participant had provided very valuable information because of the relationship

between the participant and the researcher which provided opportunities for open-ended questions and responses. This allowed me to comprehend why the participant used whole language principles in teaching Chinese to students whose first language was primarily English and also to probe for more an in-depth understanding of the usefulness of this approach. I found, as explained, that some aspects of the whole language were more easily implemented than others. Overall I believe that much of the success of using a whole language approach may be attributed to the understanding of the principles by the participant.

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